

*The*  
ROSE DOOR



ESTELLE BAKER



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FOR ANSWER, HE KNOCKED HER FLAT TO THE FLOOR—Page 19.

# THE ROSE DOOR

BY  
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Count me once for all enslaved;  
Twice for women, twice enslaved.

ESTELLE BAKER.





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Effects of Tropical Light on White Men (Major Charles  
E. Woodruff)

The Social Evil (J. H. Greer, M.D.)



# THE ROSE DOOR

## I

"In the name of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, take that shawl off your head, Rebecca!"

"And shall I walk through the streets bare-headed?" she retorted.

"Why didn't you get a hat in New York?"

"Did my brother send me so much money that I had some left for millinery?"

This in Yiddish.

A Rebecca should be mild eyed and meek; this one was black-eyed and self-willed. 'Way back in the Fatherland, after a day's work in the field, she had been known to take her worn-out mother by the shoulders and, after forcibly seating her in a rocking-chair, do, herself, a day's work indoors between supper and bedtime. This was the Rebecca whom steerage passage and overland immigrant trains had landed bareheaded and unwashed at the San Francisco Ferry.

Back in the Fatherland were five graves and Benjamin; here, in America, were golden opportunities and a brother. Benjamin, too, would come over and then they would marry. Benjamin was twenty and she, sixteen.

She followed her brother to his home — two rooms and a wife. Rebecca slept on the kitchen floor. Her brother told her that she would not be able to get worth while wages till she could speak English. With characteristic vigor she attacked the strange tongue; by pleadings, bribe and nagging she coerced her brother's wife into teaching her to read and write English; when the teacher, weary from a day of factory work fell asleep over the enforced lesson, Rebecca roused her by an insistent question. Each and every person who spoke to her was required to repeat his words till she could pronounce them precisely. At the factory, they would gladly have quarantined her, like any other plague, while her brother and his wife felt that they were as veritable martyrs as any boiled in oil.

It would have taken a meek-eyed Rebecca five years to learn the English acquired by this one in five months.

What she earned did not pay for what she ate, much less enable her to make any payments on

the transportation with which her brother, by great privation, had provided her. How, then, would she ever be able to buy wedding clothes? These thoughts kept her awake when she should have slept, and made her irritable at her work.

Month after month slipped by; Benjamin would soon be in America and she not ready, was all her thought. One more letter she would receive from him, just one — telling of his sailing.

The letter came; it was of absorbing interest; she read it twenty times; it stated, first, the news of the unexpected death of his father; second, the long-known fact of a mortgage on the shanty he called home; the equally familiar truth of the existence of a mother plus five children younger than himself. The inter-mezzo was a tragedy — he would not be able to come to America for years, if ever! The grand finale was a hope that between them they might be able to save money enough for her return passage, when they would marry and all live together on the mortgaged patch.

Rebecca was never known to yield — to Fate or anything else. She had to be knocked down.

She wrote Benjamin a long reply. She enumerated her obligations: back board and passage money due her brother, to acquire; wedding

clothes to buy and return conveyance to secure. All this she would earn herself, for, she told him, he could spare nothing from the mortgage and family of seven. This she must accomplish before they could be married, but, she assured him, she could and would do it — if not in one year, why, then in two, and she comforted by reminding him that as he was barely twenty-one and she seventeen, they would not be so very old even in two years. She closed by writing “Good-bye” in English just to show him how much she had learned.

She “could” and she “would” was her song at work; her prayer at night; yet try as she might, she could never get beyond something to eat and wear and a few pennies paid to her brother.

One day her brother’s household was increased by a wee person and the wife no longer worked in the factory. Later, Rebecca, too, left, resolved to seek riches elsewhere. An agency placed her in domestic service and she was actually able to save more pennies for the back board — but always pennies.

Max knew Rebecca’s brother before he knew that brother had a sister, therefore he came to visit Rebecca’s brother. Hence, he saw Rebecca

without coming to see her and having seen her he came to see her.

Good feeding showed in Max's cheeks and his clothes were fine enough for a Rabbi. Better yet, thought the brother, he smiled on Rebecca.

However, there is only one man for one woman and Rebecca cared no more for him than for a street cat — and showed it.

The months slipped by. In the kitchen of a strange people Rebecca worked till weary each day, yet midnight, in her bedroom, saw her seated before a pile of books — “English, more English; more, more,” — that was why she couldn't get a job that paid well. She must speak it “exactly like Americans and quick as lightning”; and she must “write good” too.

She stole newspapers and read them through, literally through, every word, with a dictionary at hand — that needed another dictionary to clear up its own unintelligible words.

The whole city lay between her and her brother — the brother as poor as herself.

Between her and her lover stretched the whole world — the lover as poor as her brother.

While the dinner burned Rebecca balanced her account with America; poorer, far poorer than

when she put her foot on the ship that had chased the setting sun; in the home land she had owed nor man nor woman; she could earn her living there any day; the customs held no strange ways; the people all were friends. What had she gained in this land of uncaring folk? A debt she could never lift and a distance she could never traverse. Yet that distance must be covered if life were to be worth living.

Max knew she was homesick to the death. Max knew she was in despair — but he wasn't going to help a girl who wouldn't give him even a smile.

The months kept slipping along, as uncaring as the people. Still Rebecca clung with might and main to the rock of her determination. She could and would get back to Benjamin.

Valiantly Life pounded away at the clinging hands. Milady would loosen their hold, never fear! They were maiden hands. Pshaw! What of that? They were honest hands. Pooh! Success is the word.

Right merrily the dinner sizzled to a crisp. Rebecca pondered on. Surely, there must be some better paid work for a girl who was as strong as a man and spoke English as fast as an American — she had some vanity on both points



She would ask Max; he knew the city thoroughly. So the dinner didn't matter.

Rebecca's only brother received a visit from his only sister. The sister intimated that she would like to see Max. The suggestion met with the brother's approval; also with that of Max — therefore he materialized. When he appeared, Rebecca condescended to say "Good evening." Encouraged, he accompanied her back to her place of servitude. The way was long; but not too long for all Rebecca's eager tongue had to say. She took an outside seat on the street car so that the tongue could gallop to the end of the route.

"Max, I must have money! Why can't I earn more than just something to eat and wear? Why, Max, I am stronger than you and my English is almost as good as yours. You are earning lots of money easily, for you are well dressed and have hours of leisure. Tell *me* how; do, Max. I don't care how hard the work is, only so there is splendid pay for it — oh, lots of money, Max! I must get back to the Fatherland. I must, Max. I'd kill myself if I thought I'd never get back."

Before he said "Good night" he admitted that there was work which she could do that

was well paid, generously paid. "But," he concluded, "you are too stuck up to do it."

Although she declared Rebeccaishly, that she did not care how hard or distasteful it might be so she could earn big money, he would tell her no more.

For a week he purposely kept out of her reach, till as he foresaw, there was but one face she desired to see; one voice she longed to hear — the voice that could tell her how to earn "big money."

When they did meet, she went straight to the mark.

"Tell me what it is, Max; tell me, *tell* me!"

"Oh, you'll get mad."

"No, I won't, Max; just try me and see."

He tried her with but a shadow of the truth, and she used up all the Yiddish she knew, to express, loafer, blackguard, skunk!

A week passed. He kept out of her way.

Another week passed and she had not met him; if she had she would have struck him in the face. He knew she would.

She laid new plans, she would walk to New York City, begging from door to door — but she couldn't beg her way across the Atlantic!

And Life battered away at the benumbing hands.

Another week passed; then she passed Max on the street; she did not strike him — she only dropped her eyes.

Another week and she saw him again. He said, "Good-day," and she did not strike him. He walked by her side; she did not strike him.

. . . . .  
"Isn't this a cozy room, Rebecca?"

"My God! Max, I can't see it. Hurry up and bring the customers. The sooner it is begun, the sooner it will be over and then good-bye to 'American opportunity'!"

"Well, how will I do for the first one?"

She dropped her eyes. "Not you, Max, not you; let them be strangers, all strangers."

He seated himself by her side. "I think there is a reserved seat for me before the crowd arrives."

. . . . .  
"I ran onto a big fish to-day — a millionaire; if I can land him, he will be a steady income for us."

"You needn't land him. It's three months to-day, and that's the length of time we agreed

upon; I'm through. Give me my money and let me go. I must have earned a thousand dollars, and I want my two-thirds as you said. You say it is in the bank — go and get it and we will part friends, Max."

"How do you know how much you have earned? I set the prices and I handled the money."

"Some of them told me how much they paid."

"Oh, their prices differed. If I thought a man would stand bleeding to the tune of ten dollars, I charged him ten dollars; but, if I knew he had only fifty cents, I took that — half a loaf is better than none; furthermore, I don't see why you should get more out of this deal than I; if I didn't hustle for you there would be no business."

"One reason why I should get two-thirds is, that you, yourself, said that I should. Another reason is, that I work ten times harder than you do. There has been a constant stream pouring in here, and I am tired out."

"Tired out! Rubbish! There are women who keep at it for years."

"Then they are never rested. But my time is up; give me my money and let me go."

"What do you want your money for? You

have plenty to eat and wear and a comfortable room to rest in, if you must rest a while."

"You know what I want my money for."

"To marry Benjamin? Get that out of your head. You will never marry Benjamin."

"Give me my money and let me go."

"Benjamin — is — married!"

"You lie!"

For answer, he knocked her flat to the floor.

She struggled to her feet. "You lie," she gave him again.

Again she lay on the floor.

When once more she stood, she leaned against the wall.

"Got enough?" he asked.

"Give me my money and let me go."

"Maybe a little proof will help you," and he fumbled in his pockets. "Here is a letter I've had for a week, but have been waiting the fitting moment to deliver it; I think this is the time."

He touched her hand with the letter; it was directed to her brother, but it was Benjamin's writing.

She opened it and read:

"I didn't believe the stranger, but when you wrote that it was true and that you had cast her

off, I had to give up. Your cousin Sarah and I got married yesterday."

She sat down. Then she lay down on the bright-cushioned lounge.

He lit a cigarette and paced the floor.

A half hour of silence is a long time — sometimes. So he thought. He came to the lounge and stood. "Get up and eat and dress, ready for business."

She looked up at him. "You told Benjamin?"

"Yes."

"You promised that no one should ever know."

"I wrote him the very day you came here. What are you going to do about it?"

She did not tell him.

"If you have good sense you will see what a lot of money you can make. You are a mighty good-looking girl and not eighteen years old. Do you know that if you will get right down to business, and I can get the right sort of men coming here, you can make thousands of dollars? You can brace up on drink; they all do."

"Make thousands of dollars for you to keep?"

"Well, I shall keep my share, of course."

"I have already earned more than a thousand dollars," she repeated, "and yet I have only ten dollars in my purse. When do I get the hundreds still due me?"

"That depends' upon how docile you are."

Into her eyes flashed murderous hate. He knew the look — it had been shot at him from the eyes of other women.

"I am going out for an hour. If you are not dressed and smiling when I get back, I'll kick a grin or two out of you."

A few minutes later she went down a back-stairs.

"Mary, Mary Sullivan," she called softly.

"Here I am," came from an inner room.

"Mary, will you lend me your long gray coat and black hat and veil for half an hour? I'll leave my short blue coat and hat for you."

"Sure! Have the Cops been butting in?"

"Yes, but I'll fool them a bunch."

When Max returned, Rebecca was still absent.

Presently the door opened. Max was obliged to explain to the caller that the lady had been suddenly summoned to the bedside of her dying father. Four times had he been required to make this sad statement and his face had become

as white as his collar. He reached for his cane and as he fondled it he murmured, "When she does come, I'll beat the life out of her!"

The cane was never used.



## II

John and Anna sat on the kitchen door step looking out on a dirty alley. It might just as truthfully be said that they sat in the doorway of the parlor or bedroom, for it was all of these; the only room for the housing of four people — two children and their parents.

Anna was eleven years old; John was "four going on five." Their bodies were round as suckling pigs, and their cheeks, red as the red, red rose. They laughed often. If you would know what glee-producing power lies in a kitchen door step and a filthy alley, ask your own little Peggy, for there is a knowledge that dims as experience widens.

Just inside the door was a mother; her cheeks were redder still; eyes and chest were caverns. A hundred months of coughing had ploughed a hundred furrows on face and hands. Omnipotent, that cough had changed a landscape of brook and meadow for one of ash and tin cans; it had transformed a cushion of thick, green grass into a greasy kitchen step; it had, ten years

before, removed husband, wife and baby from a village tailor shop to a tiny half-supporting farm. But there were vegetables and fruit the year round besides a cow and pig, so the baby thrived; and a second baby grew and prospered. The cough grew, too, and prospered with the jubilation of such coughs. Its latest malevolence had been to whisper of a miracle to be performed by a free dispensary and a San Francisco alley.

Besides the kitchen door step and kitchen, there was a shop door step and shop — the other half of this two-room shack. On the shop door were letters, maimed but not halt — for they ran; bumped right into each other. Yet, if the passerby could mentally wedge in the necessary hyphens, he might make the legend read:

“Cleaning and Repairing Neatly Done.”

At night Cleaning and Repairing vacated and Jack Warner took possession. The pressing bench he labeled “bed” and spoke of the space as “lodgings.” A teamster without a team, his business was less wearing than that of others in his line. Nevertheless, his weekly dollar was all that kept a roof over the heads of husband, wife and two children. Cleaning and Repairing, when it did knock on the lettered door barely brought unbuttered bread for four.

One month after locating in the San Francisco alley the cough ceased and the worn-out mother rested. Nothing was changed.

Two children sat on the door step and there were still three at the table.

A few weeks and the father went — a cut while ripping a begrimed garment and a tired man rested. Nothing was changed.

Two children sat on the kitchen door step and there were yet three to sit at the table, for Jack Warner brought in bread and meat which Anna cooked in childish fashion.

One night John and Anna were awakened; Jack Warner was crawling into bed with them; he was cold, he said. It was an easy after matter, by threats, to bind to secrecy two children who had no one to tell.

Two children continued to sit on a kitchen door step, but they talked in whispers. When they heard Jack Warner coming home to supper they got up quickly and went inside. Anna's eyes took on a furtive look as she cooked the meat, while John's wide open and terrified were ever fixed upon the man. At the end of seven months a public school teacher heard of Anna as a child who ought to be in school, and she called. Through her, Miss Alice Duncan of the

Associated Charities was informed that there were two motherless children living alone in a shanty and she called. The following day, Miss Duncan, with a co-worker and a policeman, took the children away.

In course of time Miss Duncan drew out the whole story of their lives. What Anna did not tell concerning Jack Warner, Miss Duncan saw implied, and by direct questioning learned all. But Jack Warner, the criminal, could not be found.

John was placed in an orphanage, but Miss Duncan determined that Anna should have a home in a good and loving family where she would be enwrapped by the influences especially fitted to her need. Miss Duncan's mind went out to Mrs. Miller, a woman of wealth both in dollars and heart. Other homes and women were considered, but always her thoughts, like a glad homing pigeon, winged toward the angelic soul, who, though having two idolized sons of her own, had found room in her motherhood for a young criminal, because Judge Earle had said that the boy had good stuff in him and would make a useful citizen, if he were given a chance.

Mrs. Miller had a little daughter about Anna's

age and if she would but take this heart-starved girl into her household of purity, love and light, as she had taken Philip Norder, Miss Duncan foresaw a cultured, magnificent womanhood blossoming for the child. Success meant such stupendous results that she would risk nothing by hurry. Not till the furtive look should have fled from Anna's eyes; not till ringing laughter should return to the spiritless voice; not till they had made several thoughtful visits to a childrens' outfitting department would she venture with the child to Mrs. Miller.

So the days grew into weeks; the weeks into months; and still Miss Duncan's home sheltered Anna. When the child first entered the house, Miss Duncan had a small bed placed close against her own and regularly she tucked the little girl into her nest, and kissed her good night. One night she woke to find Anna sitting bolt upright in the dark. Anna explained that she had heard someone trying to open the door. Knowing what the child feared, Miss Duncan assured her that no one could get in and that the noise was on the street. Always afterward when Miss Duncan heard her restless in the night, she reached out her hand, which was eagerly clasped by a smaller one.

Hats off to you, Alice Duncan! and if there are any plums awarded in the next world, you'll get a handful.

At last one day did actually find them ringing Mrs. Miller's door bell. Very kindly the hostess took Anna's hand and very lovingly she called her own little Mary to show her dolls to the small visitor.

The children away, delicately, even cautiously, Miss Duncan stated her errand, but no detail of Anna's life would she omit. Full of tears were Mrs. Miller's eyes when the story was done; in her face shone pity, sympathy and — repulsion. When she could reply she did.

"Miss Duncan, I *couldn't*."

Then she added, "Not for every dollar I possess, would I have Mary know that such a hideous thing could occur in this wide, beautiful world."

Miss Duncan's tears were in her voice. "It is a wide world, but not all beautiful." She choked and could not go on for a moment, then she continued: "Mrs. Miller, I am positive that nothing but force could induce the child to speak of it. People, most of all, children, do not roll as a sweet morsel under their tongues, that which is a terror to them."

"I couldn't risk it, Miss Duncan, I couldn't risk it," replied Mrs. Miller, wiping her eyes.

"You have taken Philip Norder into your home," returned Miss Duncan, gently insistent.

"That is different," answered Mrs. Miller.

"May he not instruct your sons in the tricks and skill of criminals?" quietly argued Miss Duncan, though already she read defeat.

"Oh, I hope not! I cannot believe he would so betray our confidence in him. But it is different, Miss Duncan; my Mary is a *girl!*"

"In the whole natural world it is not different," said Miss Duncan, the tears having reached her eyes. "*We* have made it different by an artificial sentiment and we are being punished for it; but our sufferings have just begun; a cataclysm awaits us — nature's way of throwing down man-made walls, and directly, or through those we love, in unavailing travail, we shall learn the truth!"

"Miss Duncan, you speak like a prophet," said Mrs. Miller gently. "I can only hope that you may prove to be a false one."

"I lay no claim to super-knowledge," answered Alice Duncan, also gently, "but I meet this '*difference*,' as you term it, so constantly in my work. The uplifting hand of men to men, the

helping hand extended by women to men, but *neither* reached out to women, that I have come to see the handwriting on the wall."

"Miss Duncan, our purse is yours for any needs of the child."

Alice Duncan rose, thanking her, and Mrs. Miller sought the children.

Oh, Agnes Miller, put to your nostrils the hand with which you clasped the child's; is there not the smell of death upon it?

Out on the street the full bitterness of her failure flooded Alice Duncan's soul. Neither Mrs. Miller's purse, nor any number of purses could buy the one great need of the child walking blithely by her side; for Anna had spent the rosiest hour of her life and was pouring into Miss Duncan's unhearing ears descriptions of mamma dolls and papa dolls, baby dolls, soldier dolls, crying dolls, sleeping dolls and wide-awake dolls.

A long month passed before Miss Duncan could calmly contemplate a second choice. Then she bethought her of Mrs. Brown, a wealthy widow in poor health, who, with a daughter full of years, lived in a large house without servants — Japanese help coming by the day as needed.



It would be a chilly atmosphere for a live rosy child — but it would be safe!

So Mrs. Brown's door bell was rung and Mrs. Brown was willing to *try* Anna, who was to go to school and do light tasks mornings and evenings.

A dungeon, called a basement, and three stories were the bounds of the house. The receiving room, drawing-room, and music room, with their pictures, statuary, piano, Indian baskets, bright rugs and shining floors were fairy-land to Anna.

The never-used dining-room attracted her also, for a shelf running entirely around it held upright plates and saucers covered with flowers, pictures, and gilding, while cups and jugs as pretty hung beneath. Anna thought she never should have time to look at them all — but she did.

A narrow passage led from china painting to kitchen. Here was one window, one table and one chair; the etchings on the wall were from smoking fats. The bedroom opening off would be Anna's. The back yard — Anna's yard — was walled in by a fifteen-foot tight board fence, of color, gray; that there might be harmony, the

kitchen and bedroom floors had been painted gray; and gray were the ashes in the stove. Cinderella, your æsthetic soul has been saved!

On the second floor to the far-removed front slept Mrs. Brown and her daughter, full of years. So Anna lay down to cozy rest each night — vacancy in front of her, vacancy above her, vacancy below and a dogless yard behind. Sleep-conducting thoughts of the big, dark basement lulled her. The kitchen clock sang a lullaby, with stroke twice as loud as in daylight, while stealthy footsteps moved about the back yard. At any rate, it was the same thing, for when you expect footsteps, you do not listen for wind-blown leaves. However, soon or late, the most frightened child will fall off to sleep and those hours of oblivion to the Terror, together with the pleasant ones at school saved her.

Every morning the daughter full of years made coffee and mush and carried them upstairs where she breakfasted with her mother. Cinderella ate in the kitchen. Breakfast over, it was Anna's privilege to take a very soft cloth and, lifting carefully one of the beautiful plates upon the unending shelf in the never-used dining-room, wipe gently from it any dust, real or imaginary, thereon; the space upon the shelf was

to be caressed in the same manner, after which the plate must be lovingly returned to its resting place. This enlivening exercise was to be repeated with the next plate and then the next *ad infinitum*, after which followed the manicuring of the saucers. She was instructed that when these, also, should have been put back to bed between clean sheets, she should beat Columbus by a second cycle with the cups and jugs, and as she could massage but a limited number before school time she calculated that if she should live a thousand years she could never hope to see them all freshly shampooed upon the same day. Thus Anna surpassed the most hoary philosopher in a concrete knowledge of eternity. Having been solemnly warned that a crack in a china landscape would constitute a felony, she always approached the crockery department with a cheerful shiver. At half past eight, Red Riding Hood took her lunch basket and started off to school, where she forgot the wolf till four o'clock. On her return to her boudoir in gray, she prepared such articles for dinner as the full-of-years daughter directed. When these were cooked, each carried a tray full upstairs, where mother and daughter dined. Anna ate in her own suite. After dinner she washed the dishes — dinner

and breakfast — went down into the creaking basement for fuel, swept the mauve floor, also, the yard of neutral tint. She didn't feed the cat, because there wasn't any — how she wished there was. The laundry was sent out of the house, but Anna was expected to wash and iron her own clothes on Saturdays, also the handkerchiefs of Mrs. Brown and her adult daughter, also their aprons and towels and stockings. When these were all flirting with her from the line, she turned her back upon them to scrub the one chair, the one table and the one window. Then she assumed a devotional attitude, but it was merely to wash up the dove-colored floor. Next she hosed the cement yard, brought fuel from the dungeon and prepared vegetables for dinner. That meal over, dishwashing was in order. If, after this, time hung heavy and daylight lasted it was understood that she would always be allowed, reverently, with cloth in hand, to approach the china counter.

On Sundays Anna sat with Mrs. Brown while the full-of-years daughter went to church. Upstairs were the same bright rugs and shining floors. Very slippery they were, too, as Anna had once found to her cost by spilling a tray. The Sunday custom was a cold midday dinner, after

which, the dishes being washed, Anna was allowed the remainder of the day to amuse herself. To this end, she regularly seated herself on the kitchen door step and studied color — gray.

If only John had been sitting there, too, she knew they would have laughed and laughed — ask Peggy for the why.

One day Miss Brown said: “Anna, I bought three dozen clothespins just before you came and one is missing. Do you know anything about it?”

Anna grew red, but made no reply.

“Why don’t you answer me?”

Still no reply.

“If you know where it is, I want you to get it at once.”

Anna hung her head, but slowly rose. Miss Brown decided to follow her. Evidently the child was light fingered, and where the clothespin lay hidden, might be other articles of value.

Anna entered her bedroom; Miss Brown was at her heels. Anna approached her bed — Miss Brown a close second. Anna reached her hand under the one little pillow. Ah, the spoons that were probably lying side by side with that stolen clothespin! Anna drew out the clothespin

wrapped about with a handkerchief — it was a doll.

Once upon a time — a long time after the clothespin disaster, after miles and miles around the china orbit, after Sundays and Sundays and Sundays of amusement on the kitchen door step — on a Saturday morning, Anna started out to the grocery for a pint of milk. She had the exact change — she was always given the exact change. At the corner she paused to look at Mt. Tamalpais and the Bay. Tamalpais had on her spring dress — such a pretty, clean dress. The Sleeping Maiden lay in her lap, looking straight up to the sky with the sun shining strong in her eyes. As Anna looked a great longing to see Miss Duncan came over her. Many, many times during the gray months at Mrs. Brown's she had longed for Miss Duncan and the little bed close to the hand she could touch when the footsteps came. To-day she longed harder than ever. Tamalpais was Miss Duncan and herself the Sleeping Maiden. When at last she turned away, the nickel rattled in the pitcher. She stopped. A great temptation smiled. She looked about her stealthily — the old look that Miss Duncan had worked so hard to efface. A rose bush close to the street and an untenanted

house seemed to please her mightily. Hurriedly she put the pitcher behind the bush and then walked quickly to the grocery.

"Could you tell me where Miss Duncan lives?" she asked the grocer.

"Miss Alice Duncan? Oh, yes."

He opened the city directory and wrote down the address for her.

"What car do you take?"

"Take the Jackson car and transfer to Kearny."

The Jackson car! She would never dare take that, it passed right by Mrs. Brown's house!

Trembling, she questioned further: "Can't you get to Miss Duncan's house by any car but the Jackson?"

The grocer laughed. "I think you might. Try the Sacramento, California, Geary, Sutter, Ellis, Turk and then some, but the Jackson is the nearest for you."

"What is the next nearest after Jackson?"

"Sacramento."

Several blissful months with Miss Duncan; and though no word criticizing the Browns was ever uttered before the child, in her heart Alice Duncan wondered that the girl had not come screaming to her that first terrifying night.

Miss Duncan's health was failing and she must leave the city for a long rest, so once more she set to work to find a "home" for Anna, to whom environment became increasingly important as childhood was left behind.

All hope of obtaining the care so much needed by the girl, and the love of which she was so worthy, had long since been abandoned by Miss Duncan. She must be content if the affiliations were sound. She found a little more.

The Merrills lived in a top story flat; had an old Chinese servant and a two-year-old baby. It would be Anna's work to attend the baby out of school hours. The baby worked her redemption by removing, once and for all, the temptation to steal a clothespin. Very soon Baby Frank loved this other fellow's sister better than he loved his mother—as is the way of sons. He was no feather weight and Anna was always tired out by bed time, but she had a snug little bed in the nursery and slept like a log for there was no empty basement, no vacant upstairs, no dark back yard leering in at her window and baby Frank's bed touched hers.

After a few months of Anna's willing spirit, Mrs. Merrill decided that she and the girl could "manage it alone," though which one was to



be alone did not then appear. Ah Wah went down the two flights of stairs with his pay, his pig tail and disgust. Mrs. Merrill sat down in a rocker with pencil and paper to figure out the number of extra hats and suits Wah's salary would afford her.

It was arranged that Anna should, after school each day, prepare the vegetables, set the table for dinner and then take care of Baby Frank while Mrs. Merrill did the rest. Sometimes Mrs. Merrill found it necessary to do some shopping after school, at which time she assured Anna: "I'll be back in time to get dinner, but if I *should* be a little late, just put the roast in the oven and start the vegetables cooking—sometimes the cars are stalled, you know."

How those cars acted! From three to four nights a week and *all* day Saturday they balked.

In course of time, cook, nurse and laundress came to cost only the board and clothes of a school girl.

On Sundays, Anna was allowed to go out from two o'clock till five, after which she remained with Baby Frank, while Mr. and Mrs. Merrill went down town to a French dinner and finished out the evening at the theatre or by a trip across the Bay to Mrs. Merrill's mother.

On one of these Sunday evenings Anna had a birthday party for herself to which Baby Frank was invited. Mrs. Merrill had allowed her to make a cake and given her fourteen candles for it. The party ate every slice of the cake, then picked up some pieces which had fallen to the floor and swallowed them and lastly raked together the crumbs on the table and consumed them — and never got sick at all.

There was no place that lured Anna like Golden Gate Park. The lovely walks; the beautiful flowers; the music; and very often schoolmates. The Sunday following the birthday party found her in the Park sitting on a bench near the merry-go-round. People passed her — in dozens, half dozens, triplets and single.

One single was a boy about sixteen years of age. He noticed Anna, hesitated, then somewhat timidly approached her bench and seated himself at the extreme end from her. He was a beautiful boy — and so thought Anna. She was a very sweet-faced girl — and he had eyes to see. After a lengthy silence he said in a low voice, "Do you like that?" pointing to the merry-go-round.

"Yes," from Anna, also in a low tone.

"Will you?" he asked.

"Yes," said she.

Arrived at the whirling pleasure, he helped her into a seat, then got in beside her. Several times, as they flew around and around, their shoulders touched as they were jostled together, and through their bodies passed a thrill such as neither had ever before felt. Each looked at the other for explanation but neither spoke. When they had ridden their money's worth, the boy paid another fare and on they circled. And yet another fare he paid. Finally they alighted and without comment walked away together. By flower beds, by people sitting, by people riding, over rustic bridges, past the deer, up a knoll, down an incline, where to aid her he extended his hand, which meeting hers sent again that glad, mysterious thrill through them both. At the music stand they sat down and listened silently. After listening for — well they could not have told you whether it was a minute or a year; at any rate, there did come a time when they arose and walked again; past people they did not see, by birds they did not hear. They communed with each other but did not talk. There came a time — no, time did not exist. Well, at last Anna came out of her trance and asked what o'clock it was. The boy took out

his watch and held it for her to see. Her face went white.

"Six o'clock!" she gasped.

"What difference does that make?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, hurry, hurry!" she, running.

He followed her lead to a street car which they boarded sitting outside, shoulder to shoulder, as in the ever-to-be-loved merry-go-round. The happy thrill came, too, though fear tried to thrust it out.

"Why must you hurry so?" asked the boy gently.

"They were going with a party of friends to a down-town dinner, and oh, I shall be late!"

"Who are 'they'?" he inquired, in the same gentle manner.

"Mr. and Mrs. Merrill."

"Your parents?"

"Oh, no, I live there and assist Mrs. Merrill. My parents are dead."

"Ah, you are more sorrowful than I!" he said pityingly. "My mother is dead, but I have a father, the best father in all the countries of the world. I would not say that if your father were alive," he apologized.

Suddenly the car stopped. As suddenly it

changed its mind and started on; then capriciously rested again. After a time the conductor sat down resignedly. After another time some passengers got off and walked and after a third time the face of the motorman took on a look of infinite peace.

Anna was four miles from home. To get there afoot, would be to face a lost cause as certainly as not to get there at all. Locked and unlocked her fingers in nervous misery; deeper and deeper grew the red in her cheeks; brighter and brighter the blue of her eyes till the gazing boy wondered when she would reach the maximum of her prettiness.

Sometime the car resumed its way — it nearly always does. Sometime they reached the Merrill's door bell, but it was sulky — it would not answer. Again it was pulled; still it pouted.

"They have gone and taken the baby!" All the red dashed out of her cheeks.

"Why should they not take their baby?" asked the perplexed boy.

Once and once only before had Anna spoiled a Sunday evening for the Merrills by getting home late; and the sting of the tongue feminine and the force brutal of the masculine had left an impression of value as the tongues intended.

Nothing short of a trip to Paradise could have caused her to forget again — but that was just the journey she had made.

Every line of her dress, and the ribbons on her hair kept rhythmical quiver with her limbs as she tried to tell the boy that having been disappointed in their plans, they had gone across the Bay to Mrs. Merrill's mother where they might remain all night.

"And they have locked me out!"

"Perhaps they have left the key under the door mat," suggested he.

No, it was not there. He looked in the step corners; it was not in them. He hunted for a possible nail; no nail.

"Oh, they are very angry," said the shaking girl.

"This is not cause for great anger," said the boy gravely.

"But they had reserved a whole table and I heard them say each plate was to cost five dollars in advance, so Mr. Merrill will lose ten dollars!" explained Anna.

"Pooh! What is ten dollars?"

Anna looked at him in wonder. Then being bankrupt in words and overstocked in tears she produced the latter.

"Why do you care so much, do you love them?" he asked.

She quieted a moment. "I love the baby."

"If you do not love them why do you so much mind their displeasure?"

Again she looked at him, again she wondered.

"Did they pay you a large salary?" he continued.

Such a stupendous idea must be seen clearly. She wiped her eyes.

"They did not pay me any money. Yes, they did too. They gave me some money. I had ten cents for car fare every Sunday, but the rest of my pay was board and clothes."

For the first time the boy turned his eyes to her apparel. He saw a neatly made muslin dress, a pretty straw hat, a pair of well-fitting shoes. He estimated the whole cost to be a couple of dollars; but he was only a boy and he was mistaken—it would have footed up double that amount.

It was growing dark; the street lights were on; a passing policeman gave them a searching look.

"Come," said the boy, "I will take you to your friends."

"I have no friends."

"No friends in all this big city?" questioned he, puzzled.

"I did have one," explained the girl, "but she had to go away for a rest."

"Perhaps you have acquaintances across the Bay?"

Anna shook her head. A helpless look stole into the boy's face, but rallying, he said: "I know one man here; rather a good old fellow; he will be able to tell me where you can be comfortable for the night. I am a stranger, myself, in San Francisco."

When they reached the one man the boy knew, the whole city lay between them and the deaf door bell.

D. Porwancher had a jeweller's shop on the ground floor. Above, lived Mrs. Lacey, described by him as a lady with a kind heart, who would not see the girl go shelterless for the night. He accompanied the boy and girl upstairs and stated the case. Mrs. Lacey rose splendidly to the occasion. She would give up her bedroom-parlor for the night and sleep on the wash bench in the laundry-kitchen, herself. Mrs. Lacey insisted that she lived in a four-room apartment. And didn't she? When the folding bed folded wasn't there a parlor. When







MRS. LACEY ROSE SPLENDIDLY TO THE OCCASION—Page 46.

it unfolded "sure and it's a bedroom." Likewise, when the potatoes were cooking wasn't the back room a kitchen; and when the wash board went "rub-a-dub-dub" wasn't it proof of a laundry?

By the time everybody had become acquainted it was so early that it was the next day, and the boy asked Mrs. Lacey if she could accommodate him also, for the night.

Mrs. Lacey gave him a look. She had given up her bed to sleep on a board. Did he want the board, too? She was speechless. She was also wrinkled. She was fifty years old and looked sixty. She had drudged in other people's kitchens till she married — she had drudged in her own ever since. To kitchen drudgery had been added the bearing and nursing of a dozen children. Eventually, the mother and drudge became the wage earner — over a washtub; the drunken husband had grown tired and gone, no one knew where. The children, too, were gone, most of them dead, and the living with nothing to spare. So she was still drudging. She had, as D. Porwancher said, a kind heart — out of no other sort can a satisfactory drudge be made. She had also easy morals — for others. Out of her long and unvaried experience, she had

evolved a philosophy — for others. It was: “Don’t work; there’s nothing in it.”

The boy stood waiting her reply. It came.

“The lady is ayther your sister or your wife. Ye can take the sofy and she, the bed,” and with royal tread she passed to the wash bench.

They looked at each other — the boy and the girl.

“It is nearly morning and I am not sleepy; I will sit in the hall till daylight,” said he.

“No, we can both sit up, and this sofa is more comfortable than the hall stairs,” said the girl.

They talked; he told her he had become acquainted with D. Porwancher through the boys — the University boys, he explained. D. Porwancher accommodated them on the side — literally, in the back room. It was pretty generally known at the “U” that he would supply cash on any article of value, and he had the reputation of being honest and easy in the matter of time.

D. Porwancher had lost his family twenty years before and cared only, so he said, to make a living for himself and Girt. Girt was a dog. The boy continued to talk. He was attending the University at Berkeley; he had been there

but a month; he had never been in the United States before; he was an Hawaiian; his father had come up the Pacific with him and got him settled in apartments with another student — Carl Stoft. His own name was Ralph Young.

Very tired was the girl and his voice began to sound far off. When finally, her head tipped forward, he guided it to his shoulder and felt a delicious sense of protecting strength.

But he, too, was tireder than he knew, and his own head drooped toward hers and both slept — babes in the woods.

Next day, constituting himself and Mrs. Lacey a Committee on Ways and Means, a meeting was called in the Laundry-Kitchen Department where Ralph transacted much business — but none at Berkeley.

The building occupied by D. Porwancher and Mrs. Lacey, though new, had a history. It covered every square inch of a tiny oblong of ground which cut a chunk out of a magnificent corner lot. For a decade the owner of the oblong had held it at a prohibitive price to the corner lot owners whose land it defaced. The corner owners in turn demanded half the money in the U. S. Mint before they would sell to the city for municipal purposes.

Jimmie Bates had done business in the city for ten years. Jimmie Bates had waited fifteen years to marry one of three capable sisters who lived in a distant county. He was thirty-eight, she, thirty-five.

A bedridden mother and a debtridden farm had held the three sisters loyally together. At last a great idea was born to Jimmie. He took the ferry and showed his scheme to the three sisters. He would lease the oblong and put up a building to be operated by the three sisters as a Business Woman's Dining Room with Home Cooking, while the upper floor would be their residence. He planned yet further in his heart but of that he said nothing. The three capable sisters agreed, and provided with their own hands home cooking that was really home cooked. They threw open the wide front door. A passing stenographer strayed in; then a milliner or two, and finally the best kind of advertising began to tell—free advertising. How they came for the home cooking that was really home cooked! Women doctors, women lawyers, women journalists, women brokers, women dentists, women notaries public!

One day the mother died. Jimmie gave a concealed sigh of relief. Two months later, the

eldest capable sister went to her eternal rest — over-work and typhoid. The two remaining sisters went back to the old home. Jimmie tried to sublet. It was easy. Many jealous eyes had noted the money-making business of the sisters. They, too, would gather wealth from hungry business women. By the most effective advertising in the world — failure to deliver the goods — there was no trade in a month. Jimmie turned the key in the wide front door. The key remained turned. A boy was paid to stay in the building at night — he slept elsewhere. Jimmie chanced upon Mrs. Lacey and gave her two rooms rent free in exchange for her services in showing the other rooms to would-be tenants — who never called. Jimmie reduced the rent. Then he reduced it again. At the second reduction, D. Porwancher took the ground floor and put in half-length partitions. He transacted business in front and kept house in the back with Girt. Later three front rooms above stairs were taken for business offices requiring elegant furniture but no accompanying manager. A boy, prematurely experienced and immaturely developed, remained in the rooms from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M.; if callers arrived he telephoned somewhere and a “manager” came

promptly in response, though rarely the same twice.

"A fake," said Mrs. Lacey, "and a whole gang workin' it."

Between these offices and Mrs. Lacey's four-roomed apartment was a large empty room with alcove and wardrobe closet. Three spacious windows looked joyously out over the vacant corner lot. Long would the sunshine pour into those windows undimmed by nearby building. Gloriously it rolled in as Mrs. Lacey showed the room to Ralph, while informing him that it could be had for a song. Ralph produced the song and Mrs. Lacey delivered the room. The furnishings would take several songs, but Ralph obligated himself to procure them. Here Anna was to remain comfortably till they could see better things for her. To her, Ralph explained somewhat.

"I can get whatever I wish but it will require a little calculation. You see, it's this way. Father limits me only in cash. He arranged with my banker to introduce me personally to every business house in Berkeley and as many reputable firms in Oakland and San Francisco as I might desire and any bills coming from them signed by me will be paid by the banker;



all bills to be sent later to my father. If I want to go to the theatre, I don't pay for my ticket, but sign for the price of it and that is sent to the bank. If I paid five dollars per ticket and took a dozen friends, father wouldn't care, and yet he allows me only twenty dollars a week which is to be used for board, lodgings and other current expenses. When those are paid there is nothing left to harm myself with. I think father is terribly afraid I might be led into gambling. Being already established in rooms in Berkeley, a bill for furniture could not reasonably be sent to father, but I'll think it out."

How he thought it out Anna did not learn for several days, but on the very next one a great load came for the sunshine room.

On Wednesday, Ralph thought he had better make a showing in his classes, so it was not till Thursday that he and Anna and a Japanese boy set about arranging the big, airy room. School saw him no more for a week. The Jap cleaned the room and Ralph applied a wide border of stain around the floor. Shades went up at the windows and creamy lace curtains, a great central rug was laid, the white and gold bed and bureau were placed in the alcove, the white and gold clock set on a shelf, a lounge with a score

of silk cushions, a wide arm-chair, a low rocker, a book-case, a center table and a six-foot wall mirror were arranged as Anna directed, and a half-dozen pictures were hung at her dictation. When she wondered out loud how he could have thought of so many pretty things, Ralph confessed that he just turned the whole question over to an outfitter telling him to provide everything necessary for a lady's comfort, limited only by the dimensions of the room.

"The pictures I chose myself," he stated with some pride. They were water colors and engravings of landscape and ocean.

"The book-case I left empty that you might fill it with such books as you may wish."

When the room was all ready for occupancy it occurred to them that they had assumed that Anna would live on air. One corner was immediately labeled "Dining Room," portières hung across it, and a shelf, gas plate, table and dishes put within. Then all three, Anna and Ralph and Mrs. Lacey seated themselves to decide the ponderous problem of groceries. With list in hand Ralph went to the nearest store and in an hour the Dining Room was piled high with packages, tins and bags, smelling of sugar and spice and everything nice.

Mrs. Lacey looked on in delight and kindly said that if Anna ever wanted to "roast anything" she was welcome to her laundry-kitchen stove.

All being settled Mrs. Lacey got Ralph to one side to remark that he ought to send for Anna's trunk as she would need her good clothes to match her "foine" room.

Ralph was grateful for the hint and asked if she would accompany Anna for necessary purchases.

"That I will," she answered heartily.

When he inquired the sum of money needed she said, "Well suits do be dirt cheap just now," and she thought that a hundred dollars would cover a comfortable outfitting.

With the requisite money she and Anna made the delightful tour of hat, suit and lingerie shops while Ralph went back to school to try to buckle on the sober, brown harness of study, after having pranced about in green fields for a whole week without so much as a head stall.

The Sunday following, Ralph came over and he and Anna went out to Golden Gate Park. Sitting on the green grass he told her how he did "think it out."

"Carl Stoft and I occupy, together, a suite

of rooms at Berkeley, as I told you that first time we met. Unlike me, Carl pays his own bills, and his father is rather liberal. I frankly told him that I was writing my father for money, but that I was hard up against it till it should arrive. He asked me how much would keep me afloat and gave me his check on the bank for the amount.

Albert Young, at Hilo Bay received Ralph's letter:—

"DEAR DAD:—the dearest in the whole world, I am writing to ask for money. I have every personal need supplied plentifully, extravagantly, but you will admit, I think, that you do keep me short on cash. I want to do something fine for a friend—a friend in need—and there are some things that can't decently be done on credit. I give you my word that this matter is honorable in every sense."

A cablegram replied:—

"Am cabling banker to place one thousand dollars at your command; would just as soon make it ten thousand if it would not injure you. It's all right Laddie, only don't deceive me. I couldn't bear that." \*

Delighted, Ralph showed it to Anna who little guessed that those few words had cost the price of a pretty dress.

Albert Young's first child was to be a boy, to learn, side by side with him, to handle his

great interests in the land of the big moon. It was a girl. The girl died. Not for four years did hope spring anew. Then a child came. It was a girl. This babe lived and seemed to be the last, for seven years passed before the dreamed of, the prayed for, arrived.

The boy had come! The beautiful boy! The boy who grew more beautiful! The boy, who at six years rode his pony like the wind — or a Hawaiian; the speed is the same. Who at ten years could swim and dive like a fish — or a Hawaiian; they are peers. Who mastered mathematics as most children do their readers. Who at sixteen had become an invaluable aid in the gigantic enterprises of his father. Yet, Albert Young, holding his hand hard against his own heart, had sent that boy afar — to get the best that learning could give. When Ralph was eight years old, Albert Young stumbled upon a diamond in the streets of Honolulu — and knew it to be a diamond. Hermann Burckhardt was only twenty-eight years old when he consented to accompany Albert Young to Hilo Bay as tutor to Ralph and had named a salary so modest that Albert Young doubled it. Hermann Burckhardt was in the islands to study their geologic formation, so he said, but the only excursions he was

ever known to make were in the company of his pupil for the latter's instruction. Ralph's books were wing, fin, blossom and stone; his class room, all out doors. When Hermann Burckhardt had been at Hilo Bay for four years he gave Albert Young two day's notice of his departure.

Albert Young replied: "Hermann Burckhardt, a hundred thousand dollars are yours if you will remain four years longer with my boy."

Two days later an inter-island boat carried Hermann Burckhardt to Honolulu and a Pacific steamer took him thence. Whatever the barriers which had corralled him on Hawaii, the bars were then down and he sprang through the opening. Was his name Hermann Burckhardt? They never knew.

It was the fourth Sunday since Ralph and Anna had tried to be sociable with the untalkative door bell and Ralph had come over from Berkeley. They were going out to the beach. Anna wore a dark blue suit and hat which she and Mrs. Lacey had selected.

They boarded a car and chattered till it reached Sutro Station. They left the car and chattered on till they reached the beach. They strolled

on the sand, they bought peanuts, they climbed Sutro Heights, they stood on the parapet and looked out over the ship-specked ocean, and when the sun had swelled and dimmed, they entered a town-bound car and chattered all the way back to Anna's room where they had tea and sandwiches and then all the glory faded out of their sky — Ralph had to leave to catch the ferry.

Wednesday he came over with tickets for the theatre.

“Oh, what a large picture!” exclaimed Anna. It was the beautiful landscape on the stage curtain. “And such a lovely frame, just electric lights!” she went on to Ralph's wonderment, for he had yet to learn that, except in God's free gallery she had seen nor stage nor play.

“The ceiling's almost as pretty as the sky at night — it's blue just like it, and it's all spangled with electric lights that are brighter than the stars, only there aren't so many,” she prattled on.

The boy looked at her, joying in her joy, though he could not understand it.

“Oh, it's a fairy story!” This when the white-plumed caps of the men and the spangled silks of the women came into view.

Hours later they had supper to the music of

an orchestra, a car ride home, a little chatting in Anna's room — then Ralph must get back to Berkeley. He glanced at the white and gold clock, took out his watch and estimated: "Seven minutes to catch the last ferry; time needed, twenty; can't be caught."

He replaced his watch and fished in his other pockets for gold and silver.

"Five cents for car fare in the morning," he announced triumphantly, "ten cents for ferry transportation," holding up the proof, "and ten cents left for lodgings."

Then he laughed, "Me for Mrs. Lacey's wash-bench."

"Oh, no! It's nearly morning," said Anna as once before. "We can both sit up and this room is more comfortable than the kitchen."

But it was different. Then she was sorrowful and he sorry. Now they were both happy, happy, happy!



### III

In time, it came to be Anna's custom, if she awoke, to slip on a pretty kimono and make a cup of coffee for Ralph before he left for school, but if she slept, he kissed her very lightly and went out with a soft "Aloha!"

"Do you like Grand Opera?" he asked her one evening.

Anna didn't know, she had never heard one.

"You shall have a chance to find out."

The next week she discovered that she liked it — she was certain of it; it was angel land and every angel had a good voice.

Ralph did not give his undivided attention to the angels. He was perfectly conscious of the girl at his side. There was not a prettier one in sight — but they were all better dressed! A fact he could not understand when he knew her clothes to be new, up-to-date and of the best material. He set to work to "think it out" and he did. Anna was in a street suit, the others in full evening dress!

They talked it over that night and next day

Anna and Mrs. Lacey undertook another entrancing expedition.

The following evening Anna lay sound asleep on the lounge of silken pillows while Ralph sat digging at school work which had piled the higher from his previous night's neglect.

When he returned from school next day he opened the door upon a strange woman sitting in the big arm-chair. Her head drooped forward and a large hat shaded her face. No common person, she! Her clothes proclaimed taste and money. A pale blue silk dress peeped from a long, white cloak and the white hat was covered with ostrich tips. He couldn't "think it out." When he had stood irresolute as long as the lady thought proper, she sprang up and threw her arms about his neck. From behind the Dining Room portières came a hearty, boisterous laugh, while between the curtains poked Mrs. Lacey's head.

"Do you like them?" asked the lady in white.

Ralph looked her over and approved and at the opera that night he compared her with the best dressers and was satisfied.

"What does 'Aloha' mean?" asked Anna one morning, as Ralph was leaving her with the word on his lips.

With his hand on the door knob he paused: "Why, 'Aloha' means everything that is kind and nothing that is not. It means 'Good day'; it means 'Good-bye'; it means friendliness; it means, 'I love you'; but unlike the word 'love,' it can be sent through any third person, from anyone to anyone, without offense, because it signifies whatever the receiver interprets it to say, with the certitude that only kindness is intended. Is it clear, Anna?"

Being assured that it was, he hurried on to school.

One Sunday they took an automobile ride, stopping at the orphanage for John, who sat with the chauffeur. Wildly flew John's hair, ditto his tongue, likewise his head in attempts to see both sides of the street at once. It was John's habit each time he met Anna, to tell her that when he got big he would buy a house for her; to-day he added, "and a automobile."

On his return from school one afternoon Ralph found Anna darning a pair of his socks.

"Oh, throw the things away! I wouldn't wear them, dear, if you did repair them," he explained. "I don't think they would feel good. I never have worn a mended pair."

One day Anna mounted the stairs of the Por-

wancher-Lacey house just ahead of one of the many "managers" of the offices adjoining her room. At the top he paused till she entered the Middle Room.

Though she closed her door, he remained standing watching it; but she did not reappear. He paced back and forth past the door, still it did not open. Finally, he sauntered down the corridor to the laundry-kitchen firm. The soap-suds lady was communing with the wash-board in front, oblivious of the apparition at her back.

Without preliminaries he said, "Who's the little peach in the middle room?"

The wash-board lady unbent her back; the unbent lady faced him. The straightened-up lady answered him, "It's me niece!"

"Oh, there's a watchdog in the case, is there?" But he left. "Business" called him to the offices the next day and the next and for many days. In time he chanced to see Ralph enter with ease the door so persistently closed.

"Ah! the man in the case," he proclaimed to himself. Then he proceeded to the tub-bent lady.

"Good day!" she heard close behind her.

Again she unbent her back; again she faced

him. He spoke again, "Is the swell who visits the middle room, your nephew?"

The lady of the foaming tubs put her hands on her hips. "It's a young man what is keepin' company with me niece — with me corjil approval."

"And endorsed by the police," added the "manager" of the empty offices.

One day Anna came home from shopping and found Ralph at study in the big arm-chair. Together they made oyster soup and a salad; opened a can of fruit and sliced the bread — when they arose from the meal there was nothing left but the dishes.

In due time a whisper was heard. The city turned its ear to listen. The whisper multiplied. It was Christmas, Christmas, everywhere.

Ralph had asked Anna what she wished and Anna had inquired of Ralph what he desired. They had selected John's present and now they were discussing suitable gifts for D. Porwancher and Mrs. Lacey.

"I want to do the handsome thing by Mrs. Lacey," Ralph had said, "for we are under many obligations to her."

"I'll give her dress goods and gloves," said Anna.

"I shall give her pure, unadulterated money," declared Ralph. "I am always so short of it myself that nothing looks so good to me."

That was how the soap-and-starch lady came to find five twenty-dollar gold pieces on her wash-bench Christmas morning.

On New Year's eve, Anna initiated Ralph into carnival life, where they blew tin horns, threw confetti, laughed at everything and joked with everybody all down Market Street and back till midnight, when they were glad to cover their ears for a quarter of an hour while ten thousand horns blew simultaneously, and every bell and whistle in the city spoke.

Once Anna threw a handful of confetti in the face of a policeman, which he caught and tossed back, in the spirit of the night.

"It's jolly fun," said Ralph.

One quiet evening at home Ralph looked up from a book to say, "Come here, Anna, I want to show you something."

Anna tripped over to his chair.

"That's almost a counterpart of my home," pointing to a picture.

"Why, it's just like Golden Gate Park!" she exclaimed.

“That’s the Honolulu house, but the one I love is the one at Hilo Bay. I was born there, my pony was born there; Kalani was orphaned there and became my playmate brother and there Hermann Burckhardt taught me for four years. Not far from the living house is my play house. It was built before I can remember; it is one story with open sides and grass roof but covers as much ground as this entire building. I have played in it with Kalani all my life when the weather was bad. When we got well enough acquainted with Hermann Burckhardt to be sure we liked him, we allowed him to come and play with us. There’s everything in it, from a baby’s rattle to a trapeze bar. Everywhere about are palm trees, banana groves, tree ferns and vines, till places become jungles. And the cascades! Baby cascades, grandfather cascades; oh, cascades by the single, double and dozen. One minute rainbows laugh at you through feathery showers, and the next, the sun’s smile has dried your garments. Then comes another tear, another rainbow and another smile. Do you know, Anna, it seems gloomy here without the rainbows. Hundreds of them; thousands of them! Dear Rainbow

Land! And the moonlight! The moon is four times as large as it is here. I never went to bed on moonlight nights."

"Mercy! did you sleep all day?"

Ralph laughed, "I rode part of the night, then I lay on the veranda and slept the rest of the time. Some day you'll see my Hilo home and some day you'll own it Anna, and we'll ride all night under the big moon and the brightest stars you ever saw."

D. Porwancher gave a party one night — a birthday party. Girt was nine years old. The Middle-Room folks were invited, so was the wash-bench lady. There was a turkey roasted by D. Porwancher himself. Girt got the first helping. There was a cake with nine candles, and a candy dog on top. Girt got the first cut. D. Porwancher poured the wine and all drank many happy returns to Girt. Three glasses were empty and one was full. An explanation was called for and everybody laughed when Anna said that her wine was bitter.

"I wish we could have a whole armful of fresh flowers in a great big jar here in the room all the time. I do love flowers," said Anna one day.

"Nothing easier than that," asserted Ralph.



"A bill for flowers explains itself. An obvious interpretation would read, 'Fresh flowers daily for bachelor apartments.'"

Next day a tabouret and jardinière came to the Middle Room and the day following six dozen La France roses nodded at Anna from the "great big jar." As fast as the "armful" expired Anna proclaimed their successor to Ralph, who in turn spoke their name to the florist.

On a morning after an evening at the theatre, where Anna had again worn the beautiful white cloak and hat, a fellow student said to Ralph as they sat in recitation, "Say, that was a classy little girl you had with you at the show last night!"

"Sure, did you think I'd have any other kind?" returned Ralph.

One Sunday in February a great idea came to Ralph. He shared it with Anna. "Let's go out to the Park and sit on that bench, near the merry-go-round, and say the same things to each other, walk the same walks, listen to the music and run for a car at last, just as we did that first Sunday we met."

Anna agreed merrily and the program was carried out. That evening she seated herself in the big arm-chair — Ralph already occupied it.

"I didn't feel the same to-day in the merry-go-round as I did that first time we rode together in it."

There was an aggrieved tone in her voice. "When our shoulders joggled together, I didn't feel any little shiver at all."

Ralph put both arms around her. "Neither did I, but this is a thousand times better; is it not so to you, Anna?"

For answer, she reached her arms up about his neck and drew them tight.

There came a stormy night when the wind shook the Middle Room with ever-increasing shudders. The unreasoning terror of the helpless sick, exhibited by Anna's mother since the child could remember, had engendered a morbid fear in both herself and John. To-night, added to the tumult of wind roar and hissing rain, two earth jars rippled through the house to accelerate Anna's quivering nerves. She sat up in bed and put her fingers in her ears; but the periodic tremors reached another sense.

To quiet her, Ralph talked: "Kilauea was the first to rock my cradle; night after night Pele has swayed me to sleep; morning after morning she has jostled me awake, but she never harmed a hair of my head — she was simply brusque in

her caressings. I'll tell you a story of Pele that Joe used to tell me:

"A Kamaaina was surf-boat riding one evening when Pele, five thousand feet tall, stood up to look over her domain. At once a strong desire seized her to ride a surf-board. Shrinking her stature and putting on a girdle of *ti* leaves and a *lei* of jessamines, she approached the man, begging to be allowed the use of his board. He, supposing her to be a bold woman, refused with an insulting answer. The goddess waited, apparently humiliated, till he came out of the surf when she sent a boiling river of lava chasing him. For a while terror enabled him to outdistance the stream, but soon he began to stumble and later, falling, the melted fire licked off one of his hands; at another fall it took a foot and at the third he never rose again, whereupon Pele, to torture him sent the lava around him in the shape of a dragon whose head and tail touched, and which ever narrowed the circle, till at last it pressed him at every point, sizzling up everything but his skull, after which the dragon lay cold and quiet with wide-open stone eyes, fixed always on Pele for her next command. Joe showed me the proof, but all I could see was a smooth round stone enclosed by an old lava coil."

He talked on till she lay down; till he knew by her breathing that she had reached No-fear-land.

Long afterward, the moon looked in to see if all were well. She lingered as she looked, and smiled as she lingered, while the lace curtains threw flowers and foliage upon two children — babes in the woods!

The very next morning Anna stood in slippers and kimono begging, "Please, Ralph, please, please!"

It was all about two eggs. Two eggs there were in the Dining Room and there was nothing more. She was insisting that he eat *both* eggs because: "You'll have to work till noon without another bite, while I have only to dress and run down to the grocer for more eggs."

One evening, "Can you swim, Anna?"

No, she could not.

"Well, you must learn. We will go out to the ocean baths to-morrow night for your first lesson. I know you'll like it and after you learn we will go regularly two or three times a week. Father says in every letter, 'Look well to your physical development' and swimming is one of the best of exercises. Before I met you on that blessed Sunday in the kindest of parks I had intended to get on a base ball team — if I could. But after the ride in the merry-go-round, it was — 'no base ball for mine!'"

Once upon another time, Ralph sat writing a letter to his father and upon that same time Anna stood looking over his shoulder — saucy lady!

"You always say 'Dad' in your letters, but I never hear you speak of him in that way."

He paused a moment to "think it out." "Why, 'Dad' is sacred; to be heard only between us two. It was what he called himself to me when I was a baby. When I grew older, I refrained from using it in public for the same reason that I would not call you 'Dear' before others."

Another day: "Can you play tennis, Anna?"

No, she could not.

"It's very easy to learn," he assured her, and she found it so. She also found it the most delightful thing she had ever done. She could not get enough of it. Whenever Ralph got back from school early, they took a hurried lunch and boarded a car for Golden Gate Park, where they played as long as they could see the balls. Then, joyously tired and ravenously hungry they rode from the park straight down town to dine at a hotel grill.

"Can you ride a horse, Anna?"

No, she could not.

"You shall go to riding school at once." And she did.

A couple of weeks later in a cross-saddle suit of dark green she took her first ride with Ralph. Often and again, they measured off the ocean boulevard on horseback, but she never became

entirely unafraid, so they never attempted more than a gentle canter together, but it became Ralph's practice to take one dash alone each time, riding like an Indian straight ahead for a mile and then back, while she walked her horse leisurely in his direction.

One morning Ralph had not been gone two hours before he returned much excited.

"What do you think, Anna, father is here!"

"Where?" said she, also excitedly.

"Here in San Francisco, at the Palace Hotel. He came yesterday and went directly to my apartment at Berkeley. Carl covered my absence magnanimously, and father left a note telling me to dine with him to-day at five o'clock. I'll be back here to-night, though it will probably be late."

It was past midnight when he returned and there was much to tell.

"Father said that business brought him, but I half believe that he came to assure himself about me. He is going to stay ten days and I'll have to remain in Berkeley till he leaves, for he will be dropping in on me at all sorts of hours. But I'll phone you twice a day, and say, Anna, I've just got to have you see him. All through dinner I was planning how I could arrange it and I think I see a way to bring it about. Suppose

you go to Golden Gate Park next Sunday and sit on the bench by the merry-go-round and I'll steer father that way sometime between three and four o'clock. You'll see him as we pass by, but he'll never guess who you are. Oh! if I only dared lead you up to him and say, 'Let me marry her.' Not that marriage is of any consequence, but the world demands it. Undoubtedly he would see, in such a step, the downfall of all his hopes for me, and the end of my education. But I know how wrong such a conclusion would be. During my first month at Berkeley I was homesick and restless and tempted more than once to take passage for Hawaii. Then I met you. My conscience pricks me when I remember how my homesickness ceased; as though there were no home to long for; how contentment quieted the heart that had been calling 'Father, Father.' As soon as I came here to live with you, in our dear Middle Room, I began to study with my whole mind upon my work, for the great Unsatisfaction no longer distracted my thoughts. I know; I know; but how can I make him understand?"

Anna spent her days of desolation picturing Ralph's father.

Of course he would have Ralph's glorious dark eyes — only there would be wrinkles around

them. Like Ralph, he would be slender and of medium height — but stooped. He would have the same black, waving hair — streaked with gray. The dusky red in Ralph's cheeks would be faded out of the father's.

In Ralph's quarters in Berkeley Albert Young sat facing the light of his life. "Well, Laddie, you've grown two inches and gained a score of pounds. If I had not interviewed your teachers and been made proud, I should have thought you had put in all your time developing the physical," and his glad eyes devoured the form before him, and yet remained as hungry as when the feast began.

Sunday came to Golden Gate Park. So did Anna. She reached the bench by the merry-go-round at two o'clock, so fearful was she of being too late to see the wonderful father. She waited long. The bench grew hard as wood — which it was. Then it grew hard as stone, which it was not. It was three o'clock and still they had not appeared. It was half past three and yet no sight of them. When it was nearly four o'clock an old gentleman sat down on the bench and talked to her a little, so for a few minutes she forgot the unyielding disposition of the bench.



When at last she did see Ralph approaching, she was dumfounded. The man walking by his side weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. He was a head taller than Ralph. He had blue eyes and no wrinkles about them. He had yellow hair — she couldn't see any gray. His cheeks were red. He did not stoop.

Just as they passed Anna, Ralph dropped one step behind to give her a smile. Instantly Albert Young noticed the movement and turned his head for the cause. He discovered it.

"Ah, you rascal, flirting with every pretty girl you see," he laughed, slapping Ralph's shoulder. "But she belongs to your class; I should not like to have you take up with nurse girls. Fine looking old gentleman, her father."

Albert Young went home, his pulses singing songs.

"Joe told father to bring me home. He said the United States was a very bad country," Ralph was saying to Anna an hour after the American-Hawaiian steamer had carried Albert Young through the Golden Gate.

"Who is Joe?"

"Joe," repeated Ralph, "oh, Joe is my nurse."

Anna laughed amusedly. "Do men have nurses in your country?"

Then Ralph laughed. "That did sound funny, didn't it? I guess an explanation is in order. When I said 'Good morning' to life, my mother bid it 'Good-bye.' Father sent to the United States for a nurse and kept her till I was five years old. Then he thought it better for me to be cared for by Joe. He wanted to guard against my being made a molly coddle. My sister was twelve years old and she, too, looked after me. Joe put me on horseback at once, first in his arms, but very soon alone. He taught me to swim almost at once. Kalani taught me surf-board riding and to climb a palm tree."

"Can't any boy climb a tree?" asked Anna, "and what is surf-board riding?"

Ralph laughed again. "I guess any boy could climb a palm tree that can climb an eighty-foot flag pole. Surf-board riding is standing on a board on top of a breaker and riding in to shore. It is not as easy as it sounds, and unless one is born on the water, so to speak, it is almost impossible to learn it. Kalani taught me to swing, too — not your kind, just one rope and a cross stick. The first time I rode off on my pony without Joe's help he crawled away and cried, and so he did at each successive independence on my part. He looked upon my growing self-reliance

as base ingratitude, but it never weakened his love."

The disturbing but undisturbed father had been gone many days and life was just as it should be once more. Anna sat reading "Snowbound." She had read it in school, and she had a way of liking better to re-read books she had enjoyed than to peep between strange covers.

"I wonder what snow is really like?" she said aloud.

Ralph looked up from his book. "Of course I don't know any more about it than you do, but a Minnesotan at the University told me that it is like standing in ice cream; so it must be chilly. Miles distant on the tops of Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea I have seen it all my life, but it was a picture, not a temperature."

One day D. Porwancher was taken ill; so ill that he had to close his shop for three days. Mrs. Lacey put cold-water compresses on his throat and lungs, gave him hot drinks and sweated him; while Anna made him soups and went to the market for bones for Girt. When D. Porwancher was well again he gave Mrs. Lacey a gold pin and Anna a bracelet from his stock.

One afternoon as Ralph entered the Middle Room, Anna rushed at him and put her handker-

chief over his nose. "Guess what I've made for dinner."

Faintly from under the handkerchief, "If I am to be smothered, I won't need any dinner."

"But you'll *smell* it, if I don't cover your nose," she complained. However, she removed the handkerchief, but even then he could not guess what it was.

"It's scalloped oysters!" she announced, and led him over to the tiny *oven* on the little gas plate, where she opened the door a crack and allowed him to peep in.

"Stoop down," she commanded. "Doesn't it smell delicious?"

"It smells like good eating and then some," complimented Ralph.

When they sat devouring the oyster pie Ralph told her there was to be a great game of base ball between Berkeley and Stanford.

"I'll get some good seats and we'll go, it will be great!"

It was great. Ralph pointed out the different teams to her: "Those with a big 'C' on their breasts are our fellows and the ones with 'S' are Stanford's." He also explained the main points of the game, and Anna experienced a bitter disappointment every time a "C" failed to get

"clear around the square" at one run. All around her buzzed a confusing foreign tongue — "a pop fly," "starting for the pill," "loaded the pillows," "slam to short," "fumbled his roller," "bat pounder," "main squeeze," "umph failed to call," "walloped out of the box," and yet more. From a *profundo basso* behind, "What's he doing? Embroidering hisself a shadow-work shirt waist?"

"What you talking about?" interrupted a falsetto tenor.

"What am I talking about? Why, you big hick, can't you see that this is the made-to-order place for 'em to pull the squeeze play? Only one hand gone, man on first, and a man on third, and a zoop at the bat that can lay one down, like a Jap auctioneer putting a fish platter in a plush case."

On her left Tragedy moaned: "Well, it's the bush league stuff they pull in this yard, believe me," which was seconded by his Man Friday in the words: "You'd nachully think, now, wouldn't you, that they'd get away from the old army game in a town like this. I wonder if they think that people that came over with the price at the gate, like to dig up with their cush to see this old barnyard stuff?"

"Look at that big prune!" commanded the basso; "only last week a pitcher hauled him a soak on the bean for doing just that stuff. Oh, well, he won't miss a broken bone or two in his conk; none of them would, the bunch o' Swedes!"

Were they Swedes? Why, some of them were as dark as Indians. She would ask Ralph when they got home, decided Anna.

Vacation approached; that period which Ralph, in September, had felt certain would never arrive and which now, he wished would never come. His ideas of honor were rather high — Hermann Burckhardt had left his mark — but he had a secret conviction that could he meet Father Time he would do his utmost to bribe that official to turn back his clock.

Vacation! and Ralph must spend it at home!

The Land of the Big Moon! Bah! A San Francisco gas jet was transcendently greater — it could show him Anna. Rainbow Land! Didn't San Francisco fog make a tender frame for the blue of Anna's eyes and the crimson in her cheeks? Was there a soul in any rainbow?

Vacation coming! Ralph must spend it with his father. And such a father! The heart that forever said "yes" and the wisdom to — sometimes — say, "no." Ralph tried to think it out.

He did not want to go and that ought to have been shame to him — and yet he knew it was not. The time drew pitilessly nearer and nearer. Reluctantly they thought of it, reluctantly they spoke of it, and, as an evening alone did not tend toward forgetfulness, they filled each one with theatre, motoring, or a long-drawn-out dinner at a down-town café.

But there were some words which must be spoken.

“I’ve borrowed two hundred dollars from Carl for you and I will cable some more in D. Porwancher’s name. Go out a great deal, dear, while I am away so that you will keep happy and well, but take Mrs. Lacey or D. Porwancher with you evenings for protection. Isn’t it strange that I should prefer remaining here with you, whom I have known only a few months, to going to my father, who was my all in all for sixteen years. There would be an intolerable ache in his heart if he knew it. Have you been entirely happy in this room, Anna?”

“I? I didn’t know before how happiness felt. My mother was always too sick to take care of us or play with us or even to sing us lullabies. Sometimes she was too sick to speak to us. Then she died. Almost as soon as she was buried, my

father died, and then — John was put in an orphanage and I went to live with Mrs. Brown, where I was always afraid. One day I ran away and went to my only friend, Miss Duncan; but she had to leave the city, so she took me to the Merrill's, where you found me. No one, except Miss Duncan, was ever good to me before I knew you. You're just like her, Ralph. I wish we three could live together all our lives."

"Well, there are two of us who are going to do that. For your sake I should be willing to include your friend, but personally, I am quite satisfied as the number now stands," and he insisted that Anna sit in the big arm-chair — though it was already filled.

"I feel here just the way I did in Miss Duncan's house — so happy all day and so safe all night. I never had any pretty clothes till you bought them for me and I never went anywhere for a good time till you took me. And Oh, Ralph, I never dreamed of ever having such a beautiful room as this for my own."

"There is a far lovelier home than this waiting for you out in the blue Pacific — when I'm through at the 'U.' Three years won't be long."

"This won't be bright or pretty at all when you are gone. Don't go away, Ralph." Three



or four warm tears, not his own, trickled down inside his collar. He brushed some from his own eyes as he tried to kiss away hers.

Sailing day found Ralph on a steamer and Anna, Mrs. Lacey, D. Porwancher and Girt on the wharf. Anna could not see Ralph for tears, and when promptly at noon, the boat backed out of her slip, the girl dropped her head on Mrs. Lacey's shoulder and cried without restraint.

"See, darlin', he's wavin' good-bye to you," said Mrs. Lacey, but Anna's only reply was to cry on.

Almost before Anna had dried her tears, a message by wireless came:

"S. S. SKYLINE.

"Two days out. Weather fine, but oh, so homesick for dear Middle Room. Aloha, Aloha!"

When this had slept next her heart by day and under her pillow by night, for two sunrises, its mate came fluttering in:

"S. S. SKYLINE.

"Will land in three days. Aloha, dear Middle Room."

A third carrier dove:

"HONOLULU.

"Father is so glad, but I pine for the Middle Room and one it contains, Aloha, Aloha!"

A letter:

“AT HOME, HILO BAY.

“Dear Hilo hills and fruits and flowers, but dearer still the dear Middle Room with the one God-given to me; for me, for me alone. How almighty He makes the bond between the two He creates for each other. Young as I am, I already know, without teaching, that it is the most powerful force in the world. I met a hundred beautiful girls in Honolulu, but one face only looked out from each, and the lips which spoke to me were the lips I had kissed two thousand miles away. I fear I mope, for father has remarked that I need rest — which I do not. I need a change of climate — San Francisco fog. But I am going to brace up for his sake and make him as happy as I can, with a heart that has committed treason to him. Oh, I do love him! As much as ever? When I started for the United States there was not one thing he could have asked of me to which I would not have replied, ‘Yes, father, I will, for I am sure you know best.’ Now, there is *one* thing, which, should he request it, I would refuse.”

The earth continued to rotate and each turning made a day and even three months is only ninety days, so if the world would only continue to spin there would have to come an end to those three times thirty days; and there did. Then there had to be three people and a dog at the dock; and there were. The tears should all have been turned to smiles at this time; and they were. Upon landing, Ralph should have run down the gang plank and kissed all four — and he did!

And that is the way in which every sorrowful parting should conclude.

"You've grown like everything, Anna," said Ralph, when they were once more in the beloved Middle Room. Thereupon, they both must needs measure against the wall, Ralph marking for Anna and she doing the same for him. They measured to the same mark. Next, they had to go to the grocery and be weighed, and Anna had the best of the weight.

"You're not going to make any fairy, Anna; you'll be a Venus de Milo," declared Ralph.

About three weeks after Ralph's return Anna gave a birthday party, to which she invited Ralph, Mrs. Lacey, and D. Porwancher. It was Anna's birthday and her cake required six more candles than had Girt's. D. Porwancher gave her a chain and locket; the locket, he said, was from Girt, who, though uninvited, wished to show his gratitude for the bones she had brought him when D. Porwancher was ill. Mrs. Lacey presented her with two yards of pale blue ribbon. Ralph's gift was the talk of the evening. It was a bracelet made of three hundred tiny yellow feathers, overlapped, like shingles on a roof.

"I had it made for Anna from a feather *lei* of my great-grandmother," explained Ralph.

"A hundred and fifty little birds contributed to this bracelet," he continued. "Each bird has a small yellow feather under each wing, of which it is robbed. The birds are not killed, but caught and plucked of those two feathers and then set free."

D. Porwancher had brought wine and all drank "A thousand years" to Anna. She tasted her glass, in recognition, but still the wine was bitter.

"Tell us a Hawaiian story," said D. Porwancher.

Ralph consented.

"The morning after Hawaii rose out of the water a monstrous bird swam to its shore and from under its wings crept brown chiefs with their wives and children.

"The sea gave them their all; food, recreation and cleanliness. Daily the daughters of the chiefs came to its edge to bathe and play. One day the maiden Iiwi heard a whisper and looking up, all dripping and shining, beheld a handsome young chief gazing admiringly at her from behind a tall rock.

"'Send the other maidens away, and I will show you something beautiful,' he whispered, and as she hesitated, he continued, 'I will lead you to pearls enough to net into a veil that will cover you from head to foot.'

"At that she directed the others to proceed farther along the shore to find a more excellent beach. When they were alone he stepped forth extending his hand which she took. He led her to the water's edge and as their feet entered the surf, the hand she clasped became a flipper and the young chief stood not upon two feet, but upon a furcated

tail, while his stature grew to forty feet. At the moment she tried to withdraw her hand he raised her aloft and dived twenty thousand fathoms down into the water.

"Long and tearful was the search for Iiwi but she was never seen again.

"In time another maiden disappeared, and then another. It came finally to be noticed that ten days always intervened between the disappearances. The reason was this: the handsome chief who abducted Iiwi was the shark king, and he seized the maidens not for his food—that consisted of the smaller fish—but as a condiment; maidens being an acquired taste. He ate but one meal a day and as each upper limb of a maiden sufficed for a meal, a lower limb for two meals, and the trunk for four, one maiden provided him with sauce for ten days."

"The Hawaiians knew how to tell stories," commented D. Porwancher.

"Oo-o," shivered Anna, "I don't think their stories are nice."

"Tell us a rale love story," begged Mrs. Lacey.

"I'll give you one Hermann picked up somewhere."

"Akaaka, whose name means laughter, was a maiden sixteen years of age and so beautiful that her father always left her locked in his hut whenever he was called to battle or to fish. It was his intention to sell her to some chief of great wealth. On one of his expeditions, a torrential storm delayed him and Akaaka was without food for two days. She wept and moaned hour after hour. Toward dark of the second day, a young hunter knocked for cover from the deluge. Akaaka called to him that

the door was fastened from the outside. He quickly effected an entrance and stood with kindling eyes gazing at her smooth brown plumpness, her full red lips, her gentle dark eyes, the curling lashes glittering with tears, and the long soft hair like a feather mantle about her. When Akaaka had told him the story of her imprisonment he quickly opened his *uki* bag and took out sugar cane and *taro*. While she ate he looked beseechingly at her and when her hunger was appeased, exclaimed, 'Wilt thou go with me?'

" 'I will go with thee, my lord,' she answered, looking back into his eyes, 'I will mix the *poi* and bring the calabash of *awa* to thee all the days of my life, and if Oi-e, the Death, calleth thee, I will still sleep by thy side.'

" 'Good!' said the love-stricken hunter, 'but to-night thy father's *kapa* shall cover us and close held in each other's arms we will forget the *kona*. With the rising sun we will up and away before thy father returns.'

"The morning broke fair. Akaaka awoke with brooding love in her eyes and clasping her hunter's hand they both passed from beneath the *ahos* of her father. At the very moment their feet touched the goat path her father came in sight. With intensest anger he gazed at the youth; with deadly hatred he noted the new-born language of Akaaka's eyes.

" 'Where goest thou?' he demanded of her.

" 'With the lord of my love,' she replied, with a strange courage.

" 'Back, under my thatch!' he commanded.

" 'Not so, respected father of my love,' interposed the youthful hunter, 'even as her mother left her aged father to twine her young arms about thy neck, so would Akaaka wind hers around me, sheltered by my *kapa*.'

"The old man pondered warily a moment. Should he engage in combat with the boy, he, the old, would prob-

ably be fatally wounded. He would temporize; 'I am an old man, my son, and the old forget. All thou sayest is true, but I had forgotten. Take my daughter, but take her not so abruptly; give an old father time to school his heart to the age-eld recurring bitterness of fathers. Leave Akaaka with me for the fulling of but one moon and I shall have disciplined myself to lift her with mine own arms into thine.'

"Sorrowfully, the young people consented, and the handsome hunter returned alone to his hut.

"Moodily, day after day, sat the old man in his doorway. The great and wealthy chief of whom he had dreamed as providing him with hogs and goats and *taro* to the end of his life in exchange for his lovely daughter would brook no woman already wived. But revenge soothes and cruelty relishes. On the last day before the fulling of the moon, he arose, staff in hand telling Akaaka to follow him. Up the steps of Kilauea he led her, lifting her by her hair when she fell; dragging her where she could not climb.

"To all the males of his line, Pele owed a service once a decade, in return for a battalion of warriors furnished her by a far-removed ancestor of his during her long warfare against Kaiakahinalii who had sought to drown her.

"When he had reached the height desired, the old man opened his *uki* bag and took from it a skin filled with *awa* which he emptied on the ground; following that he lighted some twigs, and kneeling before the blaze called three times upon Pele. At the third call she arose standing one thousand feet tall.

"'O Pele,' the old man prayed, 'dost thou call to mind thy promise to the descendants of him who aided thee in thy death grapple with Kaiakahinalii?'

"Three times Pele sprang into the air. This was her answer, 'Yes.'

“‘Before thee, O Pele,’ continued the old man, ‘lies my deceiving, disobedient, unchaste daughter. Cause, O Pele, the land to break away on every side from the spot upon which she rests, isolating her, by a chasm five thousand fathoms deep, from every living creature.’

“Instantly thunder rumbled and Akaaka and her father were rolled about like marbles while a crack circled around the maiden ever widening and deepening till she sat alone high in space with an unbridgeable gulf on every side. Then the old man descended to his hut to be met at his door by the young husband. Tauntingly, he described Akaaka’s predicament. The maddened youth struck the unnatural father to the ground, then filling his *uki* bag with food and drink, dashed to the rescue of his love. She could see him flying toward her, but the grave all around stopped him half a league away. He tried to talk to her, but she could only make out that his mouth moved, his voice could not be heard. He attempted to throw cocoanuts across to her, but they fell into the abyss before they had covered a fourth of the distance. When darkness fell, he desisted till dawn; then another day of futile effort followed by another night. The third day he saw her lie down. He knew. She was starving and thirsting to death. Frantically he tried to clamber down his side of the grave. At his first move he lost his hold and rolled to the bottom. Bleeding, he rose and tried to traverse the glass-like cutting rocks at the base. He stepped, he stumbled, he fell. He rose to step and stumble and fall again and then he rose no more.

“Akaaka had said truly, ‘If death calleth thee, I will still sleep by thy side.’”

“That is not a nice story either,” adjudged the dictator, Anna. “If I wrote a story I’d make it end happy.”



The weather was perfect for tennis. Their joy was without alloy; the lost was found; the Beloved, who had gone afar, was returned. The swimming tanks claimed them often and their horseback riding was resumed.

One Sunday all took their lunch and went out to the beach — all but Girt. They stripped off shoes and stockings and paddled in the surf — all but D. Porwancher. Daringly they followed far out after the receding waves. Cravenly they ran for shore when the waters turned on them. Long after Anna and Ralph had decided to rest, Mrs. Lacey continued the game. Few had been such days in her life. They ate their lunch; they lay full length in the warm sand; they watched the seals diving off the rocks, seals climbing up the cliffs, seals wailing croupily, seals scratching their chins with their hind flippers, seals yawning like sleepy children, enormous males and little baby seals all peaceably taking a sun bath together. They lingered to see the sun cuddle down in the arms of China, and they had the rare luck to see what they might have come a hundred times to see — and failed to see; a ragged bar of vapor had parted, cutting off the upper and lower rims of the sun, and lo! licking flames in the waters, not beyond them.

Hungry and happy, they said "Good night" to wave and sand and Ralph led the party to a down-town restaurant, where they ate a delicious dinner to the music of a full orchestra.

In the morning Ralph was up and off for school betimes, while Anna swept and "straightened up the house."

Another Sunday Ralph and Anna went over to the Presidio. They entered through the Avenue entrance past the little gate guard house, on by the officers' homes, the hospital, and the rows and rows of white tents. They strolled under shady trees, over rustic bridges, by tangles of vine and flower clear to the water's edge, where, far down the reservation, the great Fort came into view, guarding Golden Gate. Anna, growing tired, sat down on a bench, while Ralph wandered farther; a young soldier came over and sat beside her, offering some bits of information on Presidio life. Whenever he spoke he smiled, but between times his face settled, dull and tired. Anna noting the shadow, decided within herself that he felt as she did at the Merrill's, when she had Sundays from two to five and car fare.

One evening Ralph said, "Anna, what do you say to shooting the chutes to-night?"

"Let's," said Anna.

"Suppose we invite Mrs. Lacey and D. Porwancher to go with us?"

"Say we do," assented she. And so it was.

At first all four shot down the incline together, Mrs. Lacey shrieking each time they struck the water. After a while Anna and D. Porwancher tired of it and went below to stand at the railing and watch Ralph and Mrs. Lacey fly into the water. Mrs. Lacey could not get enough of it, though her shrieks continued. Her play time had come at the wrong end of her years, but she gave it royal greeting when it did pass by.

"B-r-r," rang the telephone one afternoon; Anna flew to answer it.

"Hello," she called.

"Is that you, Anna?" came back Ralph's voice.

"Yes, Ralph," she answered.

"How would you like to go up Mt. Tamalpais? I've never been there. Have you?"

No, she never had, and she would like it.

"Meet me at the Ferry for the 2:30 boat then," he closed.

Anna hurried into her street clothes and ran for a car. Ralph was awaiting her at the Ferry. The boat chug-chugged them across the Bay. They stood at the rail and watched the sea gulls

follow, follow, follow, never tiring, never alighting. At Sausalito they took the electric car for Mill Valley; from there they climbed the mountain in a bobtailed gasoline rail car. They read all the little sign boards along the track.

"We are now rising forty-five feet to the minute," said one.

"This is a curve of ninety degrees," another.

They rounded something like nine hundred and ninety-nine other curves that were ninety degrees minus — oh, very little minus.

"A snake could get points on twisting, from this road," remarked Ralph.

For three thousand feet they zig-zagged upward. When they were ready to return, the car brought them all the way down by gravitation.

Again Christmas came bustling along. Clerks were worked to death; street-car conductors thought on hari-kari. Beggars with one leg stood on the corners; beggars with no legs sat on the pavement; beggars with sightless eyeballs extended a pair of shoe strings; beggars without eyeballs held forth a couple of lead pencils.

Again Anna and Ralph questioned each other as to gifts desired. Once again they consulted together over presents for John, Mrs. Lacey and D. Porwancher.

Once again ten thousand tin horns bellowed the New Year in and carloads of confetti made soft walking on Market Street. January passed and the February sun grew bright. Thousands of tourists lay in the warm beach sands. Some coughed as they lay. Children of the wealthy, nurse-guarded, flitted about in blue and red and yellow, like flower petals in a breeze. Here, too, came Anna and Ralph. Sometimes they preferred to canter by the crowd on their horses. Anna sat her horse well, and never looked lovelier than in her pretty cross-saddle habit. The beach loungers watched her far.

In March, tennis was resumed. When April dropped her tears, Anna let fall some, too, for their ghost, who would not down was abroad; the skeleton in their closet was again stalking about — vacation was coming with brutal alacrity!

If they spent an evening alone in the Middle Room both pretended to read, though each saw only words which were forbidden to their tongues.

One evening after many painful evenings, Ralph broke tabu.

“Do you know, Anna,” he spoke up suddenly, “that I am strongly inclined to come right out

with our whole affair to father, and ask him to let me marry you and bring you home with me this vacation. If he only knew what you've done for me; what you've saved me from. If he could understand how happy we've been, and how completely alone you will be when I leave, he would say, 'Come, Laddie, and don't come alone.' Oh, he would be so good to you, if he could only be made to understand. I know my father—he'd make you forget you had ever been an orphan. He would not allow you to remember that you ever were friendless. He'd love you because I love you and finally, he would love you—because you are lovable."

Again Anna sat down in the big arm-chair—already occupied. Ralph talked on: "We'd land at Honolulu, and father would give us a great party. A dancing and surf party combined. We would ride our horses out to the pavilion and dance till we were satisfied, and then we would get into swimming suits, and play in the water till we wished supper. After that we would dance some more, and finish by riding home in the moonlight."

"But I cannot dance," said Anna, regretfully.

"Is that so?" asked Ralph in surprise. He did not know when he could not dance. Always

he had seen plantation workers dancing in the moonlight, and always he had imitated them. When he was fourteen he had attended dancing school, but he had little to learn.

"We'll go to Faure Dancing Academy, tomorrow night, and every evening for an hour, till we sail for home. Home! Anna, my home; your home! Doesn't it sound heavenly?"

Anna learned to dance. She learned easily. She was fascinated by it, but she had to keep her mind on the steps, while Ralph could have solved a problem in mathematics and his feet would have waltzed on, unconscious of the abstracted brain.

The ghost had become a fairy; the skeleton was clothed in flesh and showed the face of a friend. Vacation was the dearest subject of conversation. Enthusiastically Ralph talked, described and explained.

"We'll go to Rainbow Land together! At Honolulu we'll take an inter-island boat for the Bay. You'll see the house where I was born. Father had it remodeled according to Hermann Burckhardt's ideas. Hermann said that the actinic or short rays of light destroy living protoplasm and that the roof of a veranda in the

tropics should come down so low that a person seated in a room cannot see the sky. So a low-roofed veranda, as wide as this room runs entirely around the house, and is supplied with hammocks, chairs and tables, for we live on it, except in rainy times. There you shall lie through the warm, still days, for Hermann would positively forbid your being outside from eleven o'clock in the forenoon, till four o'clock in the afternoon. He said that all living forms were distributed in zones, whose boundaries were isothermals, and that the human type found in one zoölogical zone is found nowhere else. He said that acclimatization is impossible, therefore, when migrated out of its zone, extinction always follows, sooner or later. He repeatedly said that the United States is not an Aryan climate, and is fit only for Spaniards, Japanese and Indians of swarthy skin and pigmented eyes and hair. White men in India, he said, by their intelligence, survive as long as two generations, but with all their care, a third generation is unknown. In Australia, the native white families are already dying out, and he said we are safe in predicting the death of the Boer type in time. Upon that basis, father asserts that the United States need have no fear of permanent German colonies in South America, for they will



die out and there will be no third generation of such blondes to cause the United States any future trouble. Hermann maintained that a species is sharply limited in its northern and southern extensions."

"Ralph! how could you remember such a lot of science?" exclaimed Anna, putting her hands to her head.

"Oh, I didn't," laughed Ralph. "You see, father swears by Hermann Burckhardt to this day and his religious stunts consist of the intonation of Hermann's credos into my ears."

"Tell me some more about the house, but leave out the zones," begged Anna.

"All right; you're in the hammock, you know. Just lie there and watch the white doves fly down to the fountains; smell the thousand blossoms climbing over the lattice, reach out a hand and pluck an orange from a salaaming branch, and if you hunger, Kalani will run to the far-removed cook house and fetch you Kona coffee and cakes. And I shall be a nonentity!" sighed Ralph. "Joe will fall in love with you and forget that I was, am, or ever shall be. Kalani will spend all his days weaving *leis* of roses for you, and father — will love me more than ever for bringing him Venus de Milo!"

"Oh, Ralph, how foolish you are," and a hand was clapped over his mouth.

When the hand was removed he continued: "Then at night we'll mount our ponies and ride under the glorious moon. Ride fast and free over smooth roads under arching branches; ride gingerly over coils of old lava; ride between walls of night-blooming cereus; ride down into gulches, where you will have to stand in your stirrups to keep your mount; ride abreast over green velvet; ride singly along rocky precipices. Ride, ride, ride, till the red ball dies. Then we will return to sleep on Hermann's cool, dark veranda. Next day we will go out to the big pili-thatched play-house and you and Kalani and I will pretend we are all just six years old again, and we will set up the toy trees and houses and animals and eat out of dishes no bigger than a dime. There will come a day," Ralph's voice took on a serious tone, "when Kalani will prepare you a meal of the most delicious food ever made by mortal hand. He will bring you a bowl of *poi*! When you taste it you will call it sour paste—but don't. Don't if you want Kalani to live.

"Oh, it can all come true, Anna; I am not too young to marry; I am nearly eighteen and father married young."

"But how would I ever get you back to the Middle Room? Penned up in just one room after all the sky for a roof?"

Ralph tried to look perplexed. Then he seemed to solve the riddle.

"I see! I see! There won't be any Middle Room after father meets Venus de Milo. It will be an airy suite at Sea View Villa."

The days sped, but the faster the better!

"We'll go home on one of father's boats," declared Ralph. "Captain Cunningham is my brother-in-law and we'll take passage with him. The boat is a sailer, and therefore slow, but that will be all the jollier."

A few days later: "I am thinking out my great letter to father; every day I think of something to strengthen my case. I don't want to pen it till I have made it so strong and so convincing that he will draw the inevitable conclusion that his 'No' and not his 'Yes' will wreck my future.

"When I finish school, father and I are to take a two years' tour around the world. Now, instead of two people, there will be three. The immortal three! One for all and all for one!"

One evening Ralph lay stretched out on the lounge among the innumerable cushions, while

Anna washed the dishes in the Dining Room.

"I am going out for a Turkish bath," he said, rising. "If I am very late, please put Venus de Milo to bed," and laughing, he went out.

When Anna opened her sleepy blue eyes next morning, she concluded that it was late, for Ralph was gone to school. She leaned out of bed to look at the white and gold clock, but it had stopped — it pointed to six o'clock; but, no, it was ticking robustly. The hands must have caught. She got into slippers and kimono and went to Mrs. Lacey's room.

"What is it, darlin'?" came through the door.

Anna asked the time.

"It's just six o'clock," she was answered.

Anna stood irresolute a moment and then went back to her room. She was dazed. What had happened to Ralph?

Had his heart failed in the bath? As soon as she heard Mrs. Lacey stirring she went white and trembling to her.

"Don't you worry, darlin', he's all right. He just laid down to rest after his bath and fell asleep. He'll be home soon."

At nine o'clock she said to the crying girl: "He just overslept, and when he woke it was school time. You'll be gettin' a telephone, soon."

Anna tried to kill time by dressing herself; by combing her hair; by making coffee she could not drink; by toasting bread she could not eat. Then she went again to Mrs. Lacey.

"Now, darlin', be aisy, you'll hear by noon," she solaced.

And so it was.

As the white and gold clock told twelve, someone knocked on her door. She opened it to a messenger boy, who gave her a letter from Ralph. It read:

"A terrible thing has happened. It will kill my father and break your heart. I am enclosing a money order for all the cash I can raise and will send more later. Oh, Anna, dear love, dear wife, Aloha! Aloha!"

For an hour she read and re-read the note, then she took it to Mrs. Lacey.

"He says he will 'send' the money," she pointed out. "Isn't he coming back?" and she laid her head on Mrs. Lacey's shoulder and cried as once before she had done on a wharf, when she had thought she might see him no more forever.

"Whatever is the matter, don't ye doubt him, darlin'," comforted that lady, "he'll come back just as soon as iver he can and it's not his fault, whatever it is — the sweet young man."

But when Anna had gone restlessly back to her room, Mrs. Lacey had a word with Mrs. Lacey — “They’re all divils, ivery one ov them,” said the former lady to the latter.

In the middle of the night, Mrs. Lacey was awakened; she listened; she heard a sound; she located it; she went to Anna’s room; the door opened at her touch. Anna’s door unlocked at midnight! The girl forever afraid of the softest step outside her door! Mrs. Lacey found her sitting up in bed weaving to and fro and crying so unrestrainedly that the policeman on his beat might have heard — had he been on his beat.

She looked not up at Mrs. Lacey, nor ceased to weave or cry.

“Oh, darlin’, lay down and go to sleep. He’ll be back soon. Ye couldn’t keep him away. You’re the light of his eyes, and he is the true-hearted boy — that he is.” And Mrs. Lacey continued to talk and caress till Anna did most unwillingly float off to No-fear-land.

Then Mrs. Lacey had another word with Mrs. Lacey. “The dirty loafer! Sure it was meself that knew him for a blackguard the first time I set me eyes on him. The hathen Oriental!”

Night after night, Mrs. Lacey was awakened. Night after night she made her journey through

the door which was always open. Night after night she sounded Ralph's praises into Anna's eager ears, till the ears heard not and the blue eyes saw but dreams — dreams all happiness with Ralph forever returned!

Faint and fagged for want of sleep, Mrs. Lacey, each morning, resumed her daily stoop over tub and irons. At last it did occur to Anna that it must tire out Mrs. Lacey to be so robbed of her rest and she resolved to cry more softly — to cry with her face in her pillow. When Anna expressed regret at the thoughtlessness in disturbing Mrs. Lacey's sleep, that lady exclaimed:

"It's glad I am, darlin', to have an excuse to roam about at night. I am that restless that I don't be gettin' two hours' sleep the whole night through and I lay till me back is achin' from the bed."

Great was Mrs. Lacey at fairy tales.

At the end of the month, Anna paid the rent and waited. At the close of the second month she repeated the two acts. The third month, Mrs. Lacey paid the Middle Room rent — "Just a loan to the sweet, young man," she told Anna, "and well I know, it's big interest he'll pay me when he comes back."

The fourth month D. Porwancher paid the rent of the Middle Room. "I owed him some money," said D. Porwancher, "and I know he will be glad to have it returned in this way."

D. Porwancher, you have the essentials of a novelist!

The fifth month Anna sold the white and gold bed. The sixth month the great floor rug went. Another thirty days and the floor space was increased by the removal of the bookcase, center table and big, easy chair.

One day Mrs. Lacey met Anna at the ground floor entrance. Mrs. Lacey's arms were full of groceries. At Anna's side stood a gentleman. As Mrs. Lacey drew near he lifted his hat and passed on.

"Why didn't you ask him in, dearie?" said Mrs. Lacey. "It's when we're lonesome that we do be needin' friends. Have you known him long?" she queried.

"Only a week. He sat opposite me in the street car one day and we happened to alight at the same corner, so he helped me off the car."

Mrs. Lacey and Anna ascended the stairs.

"Come into my room, darlin'."

Anna followed her.



"Was that the last ye saw of him till to-day?" continued Mrs. Lacey.

"No, he walked on by my side that first time, till we passed a café, then he asked me to have lunch. At first I refused, but he urged me and I *was* hungry, Mrs. Lacey, so finally, I went in. He came back on the car with me. He didn't ask permission to do so and I couldn't very well prevent him, after eating at his expense. I've met him often since on the car, and each time he has begged me to let him call at my room; but I *can't* let him come into the Middle Room," and down dropped the tears that had worn Mrs. Lacey to an angularity that was dangerous to the public.

Mrs. Lacey pressed her pillow that night in a deeply contemplative frame of mind.

"Darlin'," she said, next morning, "do ye believe in warnin's?"

Anna didn't know. None had ever visited her.

Mrs. Lacey lowered her voice—"I always have them when there's a death!"

She paused to give the idea time to get into Anna's practical head.

"And they *always* come true!"—another pause.

"In all me life, they've niver failed me!"—further rhetorical silence.

"I had one last night!"

Anna woke up. "Did you?" she asked with widening eyes.

"I did that," emphasized Mrs. Lacey. "There was three knocks on the head of me bed—that's a death! There was two knocks on the foot of me bed—that means it's in me house. There was a knock on the right side of me bed; on the right side, mind ye—that means it's a *man*! And last came sivin knocks; sivin do ye mind, on the left side of me bed—that means," Mrs. Lacey's voice repeated in a whisper, "that means he's been dead sivin months!"

Mrs. Lacey waited for the proper ghostly faith to germinate in Anna, and then with every faculty at "attention," prepared for a final and victorious onslaught.

"Now, darlin', isn't it a great comfort to know that he niver deserted ye at all, at all, but just died, the sweet young man!"

A momentary halt was strategic; then the general advanced. "And ye are a widow!" The general saluted. "And it's no good ye will be doin' him or yourself by stayin' here all alone." The general sounded taps.

The gentleman of the street car called. He arrived late and left early. The first time he entered the Middle Room, he put an arm around Anna, saying, "Give me a kiss."

She stood passive, while he pressed his mouth to hers.

"Oh, warm up!" said the street-car gentleman.

He had the habit of coming rather regularly for a couple of weeks, and then staying away for the same length of time.

On one of his visits Anna said to him, "I need a pair of shoes."

"Let me see your shoes."

She showed them. The soles were worn through and the kid peeled off in patches. He walked to the closet to see if there were a better pair which she was hiding. There were no others.

"You can get these half soled for fifty cents, and a ten-cent bottle of blacking will make them look like new." He handed her sixty cents.

On another visit Anna said, "There is nothing to eat in the house." He crossed over to the Dining Room and opened some cans. One contained coffee, the others, nothing. In a paper

bag was a half loaf of bread, on a saucer, an inch square of butter.

"You should get a package of breakfast cereal; it is very nourishing and lasts a long time," he told her, "and it will cost only twenty-five cents — a cake of butter, also twenty-five cents; milk, a pint, five cents per day; one loaf of bread a day, five cents. I'll fix you out for a couple of weeks, then I'll be around again." He handed her two dollars.

Months make years, according to the almanac, and one day there came a day when it was one year from the day of the Turkish bath.

Venus de Milo celebrated the anniversary by crying. Crying the kind of tears that swell the eyelids and make the nose red — which also blister the heart and break the hold on life.

Toward evening, Venus put on her cloak and hat; also a veil. Then she walked back into the laundry-kitchen department and put both arms around the wash-board lady's neck and kissed her twice and then again. From there she descended to D. Porwancher and put her arms about his neck and kissed him on both cheeks. She found Girt and kissed him also. Then she went. Where? To hell!

## IV

Far across the continent where they stand in ice cream half the year, Grace Howells was walking slowly from University Avenue on to the Campus of the University of Minnesota. As she walked, she read from a book of red and gold:

“Unless you can think, when the song is done  
No other is soft in the rhythm;  
Unless you can feel, when left by one,  
That all men else go with him;  
Unless you can know when unpraised by his breath,  
That your beauty itself wants proving;  
Unless you can swear ‘for life, for death’—  
Oh, fear to call it loving!”

Partly closing the book, she left the broad way leading to the main building and crossed the soft green to sit under the majestic oaks. Reopening the book she continued to read:

‘Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,  
On the absent face that fixed you;  
Unless you can love as the angels may,  
With the breadth of heaven betwixt you;  
Unless you can dream that his faith is fast  
Through behooving and unbehooving;

Unless you can *die* when the dream is past —  
Oh, never call it loving!"

"Too early, Grace, to sit on Mother Earth's lap — her apron is damp from the spring washing."

"I guess you're right, Tom."

At which reply a strong hand reached down to help her up and they passed on together.

Hours later, when she faced homeward, she again opened the book of red and gold:

"Unless you can feel when left by one,  
That all men else go with him" —

"Where is he? Will I ever find him?" she whispered.

"Oh, to feel 'That all men else go with him.' How would it feel? I have never felt it, and yet I am not young."

No, not young; she had lived two and twenty years; and how she ached to look upon the One.

For a few weeks, however, she forgot the One To Be for the One Who Had Been — her father. With failing eyes and shriveling lungs, he had clung to his high stool and low pay at the small desk of a little business concern and by sheer bull-doing had forced his coward heart to stand by the pumps, had ordered the dimming eyes to

continue to see, till Grace should have finished her college course and now, with not a drop of yellow in him, those miserable subalterns had delivered him to the foe — and Grace not through school by a whole year!

Grace returned from the cemetery to several things — an empty home; an empty purse; a certainty of having to work; an uncertainty of being able to find work and the definite postponement to an indefinite time of her graduation day.

Her first step was to leave the rooms for two and seek one for one. Her next, to secure employment. In the latter quest she had two surprises — one at the ease with which office work was obtained, and the other at the microscopic salary attached.

She cried herself to sleep the night following the surprises. There was not enough money in the pay to buy clothes. How, then, was she to save enough for another college year?

She was young, which is a synonym for inextinguishable hope. She felt sure that faithful, efficient work would be recognized and rewarded. But for her confidence on the last point it might have been necessary to beg pardon for calling her young, after her own statement to the contrary. Intrepidly she entered her workshop door, but

with all that hope and resolution could do for her, the work bored her. It was a repetitious, mechanical grind, which any child could perform if trained. All day long in the mill she guided the logs to the steel teeth.

The people bored her — the girls, who thought advertising rhymes were poetry; the men, who had finished school at a dozen years of age; and most of all, the manager, who condescended to her in grammar that would have shamed a baboon, she thought.

“Unless you can muse in a crowd all day,  
On the absent face that fixed you,”

she repeated day after day, as she shoved the lumber to the saw. If only she had One to muse on, she might shut out the stupid faces about her and the still stupider twaddle.

Then the vision appeared. It rose before her in the elevator; He was handsome as a Greek god, but so had been more than one university athlete who had smiled on Grace Howells. His clothes were faultless; but so was the apparel of many a student who had striven for her favor.

She knew him at once as the One, for in his eyes sat Mastery. The others had begged; when



the time came, he would simply walk into possession.

And the man? He felt that he had found a suitable female — a goddess for the god. On her cheeks flushed girlhood's bloom, but out of the eyes looked the woman, hungering for her mate. As he gazed, he desired, and with him desire and determination to possess went ever hand in hand. He sometimes failed of his goal — not often. He held her eyes till they dropped in surrender. He would not fail this time!

No more did the office rabble annoy.

She could "muse in a crowd all day, on the absent face that fixed" her; but would she have to "love as the angels may, with the breadth of heaven betwixt" them? Where did he live? Had he vanished from her sight forever?

Never fear, Grace Howells! The Greek god knows where you are.

He "happened" to be on the sidewalk when she came down from work that night. The next night it "happened" again. The third night, and all the rest, he waited for her. He requested permission to call on her and he called.

Grace's room, like all rooms of all girls, who are artistic, intellectual and poor, was a charming little parlor when a friend came, a dining-room

when she set out her canned food, and a bedroom when the folding bed unfolded.

On his first call, the charming little parlor was made more charming by fresh flowers and the canned goods were obliterated by new curtains over their shelves. Rose-colored shades made sunset of the gas; the folded bed was a chiffonier, holding photos and college souvenirs. The kitchen table covered out of sight, under a silken spread and load of books.

She learned his name — Merritt Jordan; his business, junior manager for an insurance company. His work took him out of Minneapolis a part of each month. Every evening, when in town, he spent in Grace's small room. Always, before he left, she spread a dainty luncheon.

At first they conversed or read to each other. Later, one evening, as he sat fingering the pages of a volume of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems, a brilliant scheme unfolded before his exulting eyes. He would court by proxy. From those throbbing sonnets he would read to Grace, and she should reply in the impassioned words of the most impassioned of women lovers. With the same book of poems between them, he would read:

“Love me, sweet, with all thou art,  
Feeling, thinking, seeing;  
Love me in the lightest part,  
Love me in full being.”

Then she :

“The face of all the world is changed I think,  
Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul.”

He :

“Love me with thy open youth  
In its frank surrender;  
With the vowing of thy mouth  
With its silence tender.”

She :

“What can I give thee back, oh, liberal  
And princely giver, who hast brought the gold  
And purple of thine heart unstained, untold,  
And laid them on the outside of the wall  
For such as I?”

Periodically, Grace Howells framed her heart in crepe — for the days she could not see him, hear him, feel him; when all her occupation was to “muse in a crowd all day on the absent face that fixed” her, when all sensation was summed up in feeling that, “When left by One, all men else go with him.”

For their mutual enjoyment he brought a piano into her room. He sang, but could not play; she

played, but did not sing. Leaning against the piano till he faced her playing his accompaniment, and holding her eyes with the mastery of his own, he would lift his well-trained baritone in: "Love Me and the World is Mine."

Again:

"Oh, wert thou in the cold blast, on yonder lea, on yonder lea,  
My plaidie to the angry airt, I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee!"

He was a dramatic singer — an arm answered for the plaidie.

Then again came those days of blackness when he came not, to be succeeded by the flood tide radiance of his presence.

Two must needs sit very close to read out of the same book. Shoulders often touched, and sometimes, even heads. Sitting thus he would read:

"Red grows the cheek and warm the hand,  
The part is in the whole;  
Nor hands nor cheeks keep separate,  
When soul is joined to soul."

He put it to the test.

Her reply:

"I should not love withal unless that thou  
Hadst set me an example, shown me how,

When first thine earnest eyes with mine were crossed,  
And love called love."

Then both to the piano: "Give me your hand,  
say you understand, My Dearie, My Dearie."

Did ever lover before woo wholly in quotation?  
Grace wondered.

"But the king may fashion his own path," she  
loyally declared.

When the fact that he never spent an evening  
with her outside of her own room, caused her to  
ponder a moment, the very next she exonerated  
him and accused her own heart of selfishness.

In her prettiest house dress, she sat waiting,  
waiting after several days of having been "left  
by One." Of a surety, days in which all men  
else went with him. All men? Oh, all ex-  
istence!

With the blood sprung threefold into the pink  
cheeks she waited. Waited, the saint with  
adoring eyes. On its knees knelt her spirit in  
renunciation life-consuming; waiting, watching  
for the the softest sign of the Presence. She  
heard, she saw, she felt. A tap outside, lips to  
lips, two forms close seated — and the book.

He:

"Love me with thy azure eyes  
Made for earnest granting;

## THE ROSE DOOR

Love me with their lids that fall  
Snow-like at first meeting."

She:

My own, my own who camest to me when the world was  
gone,  
And I who looked for only God, found thee."

He:

"Love me with thy hand stretched out freely;  
Love me with thy voice that turns  
Sudden faint above me;  
Love me with thy blush that burns  
When I murmur, 'love me'!"

She:

"Thou comest! All is said without a word.  
I sit beneath thy looks as children do  
In the noon sun, with souls that tremble thru  
Their happy eyelids from an unaverred  
Yet prodigal joy."

He:

"Love me with thy thoughts that roll  
On through living, dying,  
Love me in thy gorgeous airs  
When the world has crowned thee;  
Love me gaily, fast and true  
As a winsome lady;  
Love me for the house and grave—"

He closed the book.

"Oh, you left out the last verse," she laughed.

"That's a libel on my sex," he retorted.  
"Why did Elizabeth fling that slur at men and then lie down at Robert's feet?"

Grace's mouth spoke never a word, but she lifted his hand to her lips.

With the mastery she loved he drew her to the piano and with the lilt of a nesting thrush, sang:

"Oh, that we two were Maying  
Down the stream of the soft spring breeze;  
Like children with violets playing  
In the shade of the whispering trees."

Pink apple blossoms showered the earth as she listened.

"Oh, that we two sat dreaming  
On the sward of some sheep trimmed down  
Watching the white mist steaming  
Over river and mead and town."

Two, just two, in all the world sitting on the sward of some sheep trimmed down!

"Oh! that we two lay sleeping  
In our nest in the church yard sod,  
With our limbs at rest on the quiet earth's breast,  
And our souls at home with God!"

Grace Howells' soul looked out of her eyes.  
What need then, to beg:

'Tell me that you love me,  
For that's the sweetest story ever told.'

Still, he was not getting on as well as he had a right to expect after three months of rehearsing. In fact, he had not arrived anywhere. There was a slight barrier—he knew what it was. He sometimes failed of his goal—not often.

After the usual tempting lunch he drew her into his arms and with the requisite dramatic action, softly sang:

"When I know that thou art near me, in my heart are joy  
and rest;  
I to slumber soft confide me, close my eyes, supremely  
blest."

He felt her tremble against him. He knew that she would lie awake long hours after he left, gazing at a picture in which there was no "Good night." His own desire was strong upon him, but it must wait.

"I see papa! I see papa!" shrieked delightedly a boy of seven years, standing at the window of a cottage in the city of sand dunes. The boy's next move was a flying one; out the front door and down the walk to the gate.



"I tummin, too!" yelled number two, aged three.

With a child hanging to either arm papa entered the house, where he was met by a woman who kissed him. "Don't hang onto papa so, he's tired," said the woman. Then to him: "Supper is all ready Merritt; come right out;" and they all gathered around the table.

"Did you get me a pony, down in Minneapolis?" asked the boy.

"No, son, not this time, but I'm keeping my eye open for one."

"Did oo det me a dollie?"

"Yes, I did, Miss Susana, and you'll find it in my overcoat pocket."

Whereupon Miss Susana upset her cup of milk and clambered down to search the pocket.

"How was business?" asked the woman.

"Good; first class! but I'll tell you what I've a notion to do, Ida; I met a good friend of mine who is just back from a business trip to California and he says the opportunities in real-estate deals are ten there to one here, and I really would like to exchange snow banks for orange groves, and if I can settle up business here without a loss, I'd like to make my home

in the land of sunshine and flowers. What do you say?"

"I know, Merritt, that Duluth is only a sand hill," replied the woman, without enthusiasm, "but father and mother live here, besides nearly all the friends I have ever known, and the most genial climate cannot warm a lonely heart."

The gentleman was not discouraged; he sometimes failed of his goal — not often.

"There's a Charity Fair at Symphony Hall to-night; shall we go or are you too tired?" asked the woman.

"I suppose we'd better go, though to tell the truth I'd rather crawl into bed. It pays any business man to make himself popular and it is particularly profitable to the dealer in real estate. What will you do with the children?"

"We can take Frank with us and leave Susie with mother, as we go by."

When they arrived at the hall, a chorus went up: "Oh, here is Mr. Thompson!"

"How is Wright, Black and Thompson?" greeted the ticket taker.

"Flourishing," laughed Mr. Thompson, "real estate is booming."

"We'll get him to sing at the Library Fund Concert, next week," whispered a plump, white-

haired lady to an acquaintance, next her, and together they crossed over to him.

Mr. Thompson assured them that he would be more than happy to sing at the Library Fund Concert.

"Has Thompson and Company cornered the earth?" asked the banker.

"Business is good," replied Mr. Thompson, "but Mr. Wright is in Europe, and Black in Florida, ill, so I have to hustle, with St. Paul and Minneapolis territory, as well as my home market to look after."

The preacher approached him animatedly, "Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord," he quoted as he shook hands warmly; "the choir misses you sadly, when you are out of town."

"And I miss not only the choir, but an excellent sermon, when I am out of town," returned Mr. Thompson.

Ten days later, Mr. Thompson sat in his St. Paul office signing type-written letters. One hundred times he had written, "M. J. Thompson," and one hundred times more he must set that seal before he could board an inter-urban car. Scratch, scratch, scratch was all the sound in the room. In another room were only soft little sighs. The room was ten miles distant.

In it sat Grace Howells, facing a door she did not see. She was looking through it, far and away.

A light tap, outside! A silken rustle, within. The vine reached up to the oak and was caught fast in its branches.

"Are you glad to have me back?" he whispered, lips to lips.

"And wilt thou have me fashion into words, the love I bear thee?" she quoted.

That night he sang:

"Farewell, farewell my own true love,  
A thousand times farewell;"

and the plaintive sadness in his voice echoed and reëchoed long after he was gone, and stole all too many hours of her sleep.

Again the following evening, he chose not a joyous strain. With every word drawing blood, he sang into her enthralled eyes:

"A hundred months have passed, Lorena,  
Since last I held your hand in mine,  
And felt the pulse beat fast, Lorena,  
Tho mine beat faster far than thine."

Then, with the thrill of a meadow lark, he finished:

"There is a future! Oh, thank God!  
Of life this is so small a part.  
'Tis dust to dust, beneath the sod,  
But there, up there, 'tis heart to heart!"

"Oh, don't!" was all that came to his ears,  
but her pounding heart was crying, "A hundred  
months apart? Oh, better to fall dead here and  
now."

Another evening from the book.

He:

"I lift my heavy heart up solemnly,  
And looking in thine eyes, I overturn  
The ashes at thy feet."

"Why so sad your words," she questioned,  
caressing his hair.

He replied from the book:

"Accuse me not that I wear  
Too calm and sad a face in front of thine;  
For we two look two ways and cannot shine  
With the same sunlight on our brows and hair."

From the book she answered him:

"My own sweet love, if thou in the grave,  
The darksome grave wilt be;  
Then will I go down by thy side and crave,  
Love, room for me and thee."

Then another period of death when he came not; another resurrection at the dear familiar tap outside the door, and the heart's nectar of kiss and embrace. But the cloud of a smothered pain bedimmed his eyes and the halt of an aching thought entangled his tongue — so love interpreted; and Love cannot be blind for his arrow wingeth sure. Often that evening, Merritt Jordan's head rested in his hands; often faint sighs escaped him. He sang a song, but his voice broke in the singing.

"What is it?" she pleaded, when she could no longer endure it.

He, without the book, "Could you forgive me if I had done a wicked, wicked thing?"

"You wouldn't commit a wicked act, Merritt."

He, without the book, "I have done a great wrong. I have won your love, have I not?"

She gave a relieved laugh and drew his face down to hers.

"That was cruel, Merritt, to frighten me so."

"But Grace, you do love me, don't you? Tell me plainly."

"Merritt," she said, all gravity, "I wonder I keep my office position — I am in a daze all the days through dreaming of the evenings when I

shall see you. Over everything is written, 'Merritt'—on the walls, on the floors, and even on the faces of those about me. The lightest room is dark if you are not in it; the darkest place is dazzling, if out of it looks your face. The street is empty when you are not by my side," she lowered her voice, "there would be no world if you were dead."

"That is the wrong I have done—I have won your love," he said and sighed.

"Please stop joking, Merritt."

"I am not joking!" He buried his face in his hands.

"What do you mean, Merritt dear? Don't speak in riddles."

He lifted his head a little. "I could not help loving you, Grace. You were a blushing rose, a stately lily and a luscious fruit all in one that first time I saw you. I can't help loving you now, for you are the same lovely flower, while the fruit is riper and sweeter. But this spirit of fragrance and color must be put without the range of my vision—this aroma which I have breathed must be placed beyond my power of inhalation. This heart food, whose delicious flavor I have longed, oh, how I have longed, to taste, must be gently set

aside — far aside where the temptation to appropriate it may not lure me on to its spoliation. Grace, dear Grace, sweetest of women, I must leave you forever — for your sake.”

“Merritt!” It was a cry.

“Grace,” he spoke, encircling her with his arms, “how much could you forgive the man you love?”

She leaned exhaustedly, contentedly against him and closed her eyes. Without opening them she told him how much she could forgive the man she loved.

“I could forgive him murder, theft, forgery, arson and perjury — are there any more crimes?”

“A few more,” he answered.

“Well, I forgive him all the others, without knowing what they are,” was her absolution.

“Suppose,” and he bent his head down over her eyes, “suppose a married man won the love of a girl —”

She pulled away as by a spasm. She looked at him until he felt cut into halves.

“Good-bye, Grace,” and he moved as if to rise.

She looked at him. He rose hesitatingly to



his feet. She only looked at him. He walked slowly toward the door.

He was going! She could never find him if he went! The room would never be light again! The street would always be empty! There would be no world! She tried to speak loudly; she accomplished a whisper, "Stay, Merritt."

## V

Among hundreds of beautiful residences sitting in the lap of Ocean View, three companions lean contentedly against her bosom blinking at the water through plate-glass windows. About the verandas of one winds royal wistaria; making fitting canopy for her of queenly heart. At one side an arched way gives passage from street to garage; terraces slope toward Golden Gate; roses hedge the grounds; the great trees, shading hammocks, felt the pull of swings and heard the creak of boards in the see-saw days of the children of the house. The splendid attic, once nursery, now contains boxing gloves and fencing foils; its walls are adorned with the pennants and souvenirs, considered proper for a male den, by very young males. One corner was generously offered to the only sister, to decorate as she would, but she had considered her neighbors too barbarous.

Before the top-spinning days of her own two sons were passed, Agnes Miller took into this

beautiful home a lad, whose abode had been the streets; she laid soft raiment upon him who had been naked; the day before he had dined at a garbage barrel, to-day, a bondsman serves his dinner.

No protest comes from Charles Miller, the keen eyed and alert. Should his wife incorporate a whole orphanage into the house, he would stipulate only that he be allowed one small corner to himself.

"Mine the business, hers the home," his motto.

Agnes Miller has not found "Marriage, a failure," nor "Life, a blunder and a shame."

On the right of Wistaria House stands a brick mansion containing Ross and Lillian Kenyon and their baby. True the baby is twenty-five years old and taller than his father, yet he must once have been infantile else why the hobby-horse in the brick attic?

Schoolmates, brides and mothers together, have been Lillian Kenyon and Agnes Miller. To bind a friendship that needed no bonds, this only son and Agnes Miller's only daughter early evinced a fondness for each other, which, like that of their mothers but grew the more as grew the years.

A wizard, caught and imprisoned for three years in Ross Kenyon's gilded cage, placed a violin in the hands of the five-year-old boy. Then, though the genius was old and poor, he would away; but Ross Kenyon, the banker, could secure the best teachers of the world, if not the genii for his son; small wonder that the boy played divinely.

Mary Miller performed equally well upon the piano — but divinity doth not dwell within its bones.

The yoke to which Herbert Kenyon gladly bends his neck is neither that of violin nor bank — he has bars upon his shoulders. A military cousin to adore, and a Presidio to visit has timed his life's reveille.

When, after a score of years, Ross and Herbert Kenyon came to realize that to express a wish, was to find it unexpectedly obtained for them by the wife and mother, Lillian Kenyon, they began to grow considerate in their audible longings. If they had ever spoken words to her that left a hurt they had long since ceased to do so, and the sunset of life had grown so satisfying that she cried through happy tears: "O Sun, do not set!"

On Mrs. Miller's left are newer and younger

acquaintances. The Thompsons had from the first been congenial, both to herself and to Lillian Kenyon, though the children were too young to be companionable with their own grown-up progeny. Up the side of the house of the newer neighbors struggles a fuchsia, whose one ambition is to peer into the chamber window of a maiden — Susie by name. Each morning the maiden throws open her window, to smile down upon it, after which it twists and clambers afresh.

It is Friday morning in the wistaria-draped house. An extra cook reinforces the kitchen. The only daughter inspects tree, bush and bloom.

“Muddie, what flowers would you choose for the individual bouquets?”

“I’m not choosing,” smiled Agnes Miller, “this is the reign of Philip and Mary.”

“Well, then, I’ll wait till Philip comes.”

When Philip came, the flower question revived.

“Let’s use the flower language,” suggested he, “and place the bouquets according to the message we wish them to convey.”

“Philip! What a gorgeous idea!”

“Mary! What stunning diction!”

Jeopardized are the lives of tender plants;

disunited, friendly boughs, forever separated, dear couplets of flowers.

The great, unsociable, company dining-room is dusted; Philip hangs wreaths; Mary fills vases.

Friday night, in the reign of Philip and Mary, arrived. A party also arrived — just a neighborhood party. Good looking people! the camera declared, for Mary “snapped” them all.

Ross Kenyon: full head of white hair, black eyes.

Lillian Kenyon: gray haired, bright eyed.

Lieutenant Herbert Kenyon: six feet and a uniform.

Merritt Thompson: head of a Greek god; clothed, befitting a prince.

Ida Thompson: brown haired, mild eyed.

Frank Thompson: thirteen and vigilant.

Miss Susie: nine and plump.

Judge Earle: bald; no wedding bells for him.

Dr. Hamilton: widower, big and blond.

Charles Miller: thin, white haired, keen eyed.

Agnes Miller: silver threads among the gold.

Robert Miller: first born, twenty-four years, black eyes, black hair.

Philip Norder: twenty-three, adopted son.

Arthur Miller: fifteen, the baby.

Mary Miller: pointing the camera; gentle and gay, twenty-one years.

At one end of the table, Agnes Miller; at the opposite, her husband — of the discerning eyes.

When the courses had come and gone, and come and gone again, Agnes Miller spoke a word: "Dear friends, we have gathered as now many times, just neighbors, but I never had so glad a word to say as to-night, when I can announce the coming marriage of our daughter and Lieutenant Herbert Kenyon, on the twenty-seventh day of this month, in our daughter's home, to which we most lovingly invite you."

"Hear ye! Hear ye!" cried Robert.

"Thus it is our daughters leave us  
Those we love and those who love us"

quoted Charles Miller teasingly, yet wistfully.

Agnes Miller spoke again: "The night is filled with gladness. To-day our beloved son, Philip Norder, has opened offices whose doors bear the inscription:

"'Philip Norder, Attorney-at-Law.'"

"Never forget, Philip, that when men become angels, lawyers will starve," from Judge Earle.

"Tell us, Philip, what kind of law breaking

will best give you a start and Rob and I will enter upon it at once," volunteered Lieutenant Kenyon.

As they dallied with fruits and ices, Mrs. Miller directed attention to the place flowers and beginning with her own, wistaria, interpreted it: "A cordial welcome." Her husband held up a full-blown rose, looking helplessly from one to another.

Mary came to the rescue. "That means 'engagement,' you know you have so many engagements, we can hardly ever get you for an evening at the theatre. We are very lucky to have caged you for to-night."

"I should never have suspected it of you, Miller," from Ross Kenyon.

"Judge, what does your flower say?"

He scrutinized it. "It's from the lemon, I think, but my law library does not instruct on cases botanical."

"Then the interpreters must be called in. Philip! Mary!"

"It means discretion, Judge," announced Philip, "you have been exceedingly discreet regarding marriage."

The Judge nearly blushed and everybody else quite laughed.



"You are next, Mr. Kenyon."

"Can't even tell the flower, let alone giving information on its conversation."

"It's persimmon, Mr. Kenyon," assisted Mary, "and says, 'I'll surprise you by and by'; the trip in the aëroplane that you have set your heart on, don't you see?"

"Don't, don't suggest aëroplanes to him," begged Lillian Kenyon.

"Doctor Hamilton?"

"I hold a holly, but my knowledge ends with that statement."

"Holly asks, 'Am I forgotten? Why five years a widower?'" queried Philip.

The doctor laughed a jolly laugh.

"Mr. Thompson?"

"I have a small fig and leaf, will Miss Mary please translate?"

"It announces, 'I keep my secrets,'" complied Mary. "Secrecy is a prime requisite of a dealer in real estate."

"Lillian," spoke the hostess.

"Pink carnation, but I have forgotten my school-girl lore."

"Woman's love," Mary aided.

"Why do I get a withered flower?" complained Philip.

"It's a withered white rose isn't it?" asked Mary.

"Yes," he answered.

"That reads, 'I am in despair.'"

Everybody roared, for everybody knew how a pink-cheeked girl had been sent to Europe to prevent a too early marriage.

Philip bore the hilarity as well as he could, which means that his lips smiled while his feet longed to run.

"Next!" Robert's mother called to her first born.

"Syringa," he called back, "but I left my spectacles in my room."

"You shall be happy yet," expounded Philip, "although sweet love has passed you by thus far; while there's life there's hope."

"That's cheering," returned Robert.

"Oh, Mrs. Thompson, pardon me, you've very nearly been left out."

"Blue violet, but I plead ignorance."

"Faithfulness," defined Mary.

"Now to the nursery," teased Robert, as his mother called for Susie's flower.

"It's a daisy," she returned promptly.

"And means 'Innocence,'" explained Mary.

"Frank Thompson."

"Don't know what it is," in a don't-care tone.

"It's candy tuft and 'Indifference,'" spoke Philip, "a condition of heart accompanying youths of your age, for an infinitesimally short period of time."

"Arthur," to her baby.

"I haven't any flower," flushing.

"Well, I gave you one," returned his sister.

"You did not," warmly.

A tender, reproving look from his mother.

"She gave me a lettuce leaf, mother," holding it up.

"And that says 'A cold heart,'" exulted his sister.

"True, true," nagged Robert; "there's the girl with the Sis Hopkins braids, and the girl with the Gibson neck, and the little girl, with the little curl right in the middle of her forehead, all throwing goo-goo eyes at him and if he sees one of them anywhere, straightway he searches the sky for comets. And what have you, Miss Mary?" continued the tormenting Robert, "and you, Lieutenant Kenyon? Methinks your flowers are identical. This is mystery, indeed."

Mary colored. The lieutenant laughed.

"Hold them up," commanded the brutal Robert. Only the Lieutenant obeyed.

"Oh, bridal roses. No need for schooling on that, no call to utter its speech," quoth the unquenchable big brother.

"But it *has* a tongue and says 'Happy love,'" interposed Philip.

"Of course," spoke on Robert, "what else do wedding bells ever bring?"

"Miss Mary, I would fain suggest that you pin these sweet-voiced flowers on the gentlemen, while Philip does like duty for the ladies," said Mr. Thompson.

"Thompson always scores," declared Dr. Hamilton.

Mary and Philip did as requested. When Mary reached Herbert Kenyon, eyes spoke to eyes.

"Oh, hurry, sweet day," said his.

"I fear it — a little," from hers.

When at last the flowers were secured to each one Mr. Thompson scored again:

"Let us drink to the maker of the feast — Our Lady Bountiful."

And so it was.

"And now to the bride and groom," added Judge Earle, offering

"To the bachelor who is always free!  
To the husband who sometimes may be."

Philip gave:

Let love be your lawyer, dear,  
To him your case report;  
Till both shall need my service dear,  
In some divorce court.

"To wish you well, were to wish myself ill,"  
complained Dr. Hamilton.

"You may write it on his tombstone;  
You may cut it on his card,  
That a young man married  
Is a young man marred."

quoted Robert.

"Jealousy," pronounced Lieutenant Kenyon.

Mr. Thompson had, unobserved, taken out his note-book and written a few lines which he passed on to Mary; then he called out: "From the bride to the groom!"

Mary read from the quotation he had given her:

"Let's be gay, while we may,  
And seize love with laughter;  
I'll be true as long as you,  
And not a minute after."

"From the groom to the bride, now," called Mr. Thompson.

Lieutenant Kenyon rose. The other toasts had been given in conversational tones and with

tinkling mirth. His voice thrilled with feeling.  
He fixed his eyes on Mary and gave:

“I have known many,  
Liked a few,  
Loved one  
Here's to you,”

bowed and touched his glass to his lips.

## VI

Saturday morning came to Wistaria House — and other places. Office and store claimed the men of the neighborhood party of the previous night; home and social duties occupied the women of that party.

Saturday night came to the Rose Door — and other places. The Rose Door was a house. It was so named by its visitors from a small carving above the front entrance of a full-blown rose with an upright leaf on either side, and a bud below, also upright.

“Ladies!” she called, with the sliding rising inflection.

Down the stairs they rustled; blonde, brunette, the plump, the ethereal. Take your pick.

Robert Miller stepped up to a girl called Anna, and as the piano played, Lieutenant Kenyon crossed over to one, Rebecca by name. With arms around waists, they ascended the stairs.

A little later hilarious singing came from a room: “Oh, you’ll be the peaches, and I’ll be —”

"Sh! Herb, the police!" silenced Rebecca.

In another room. "Where did you get this bracelet, Anna?"

"A friend brought it to me from Hawaii; it was his great-grandmother's. Don't take it off, Robert!"

"Why not?"

"Well, I put it on to cover up a bruise."

"Let's see, I'll diagnose the case."

The girl laughed and pulled her arm loose from his grasp.

"You needn't laugh. I studied medicine for a year once, when I had caught the professional fever," and he renewed his hold on her arm. She struggled, but he pulled off the bracelet and studied the hurt.

"All it needs, is to be opened; get me a needle," ordered the doctor.

The patient complied, and he pricked it several times.

"Nothing doing," was his dictum and he gave back the needle.

The prophesied Twenty-Seventh arrived one morning at Dr. Hamilton's office; in the evening it will have reached Wistaria House—the



Twenty-Seventh foretold at the neighborhood party.

Among the large number always waiting in Dr. Hamilton's reception room sat a woman in a dark, tailored suit, like many another there; and veiled, as were others. In her turn, she entered the private office.

"What's the trouble this time, Anna?"

"I don't know myself, but I'll show you," and she bared her arm.

When his last patient had left and his office door been locked, Dr. Hamilton reached for paper and pen to write a letter, although he would be hurried to make his professional calls and dress and reach Wistaria House by six o'clock. It was a letter of many pages, well sprinkled with interrogation points.

The wistarias were all in the shade when Dr. Hamilton passed beneath them. Not because it was dark, for never had they been so deluged with light. Festoons of electric globules, three deep, wound about the verandas; every palm and pepper was a mighty Christmas tree, a-glitter from top to bottom. Out in space hung balls of light, suspended from nothing. From house to waiting automobiles a roadway of roses made soft

stepping. A flood tide of brightness swept from basement to attic.

The great unsociable dining-room is all too small. Again flowers wreath the walls, fill vases and lie by the plates. The choicest of fruit and fowl await the order of the chef. In the conservatory an orchestra bides the signal of their leader, who in turn watches tensely through the doorway. She comes! His hand upraises. Half a hundred strings thrill out: "Hail to the Bride!"

Again glad words and happy replies, around a prodigal table, through all of which the orchestra sings in whispers.

Deserted is the table at last; hand shaking, kissing and good-byes follow. Down the rose road walks a man in uniform leading the daughter — the only daughter of the house.

"So long, Mary," calls her big brother.

A shower of rice from Philip; a wave of hand from the father; a flutter of handkerchief by the mother. The machine is out of sight.

. . . . .

Another night came to the Rose Door. As a matter of fact nights never failed to come to that Public Benefit; had the calamity of an immortal day fallen on that tollbooth its commanding buc-



ANOTHER NIGHT CAME TO THE ROSE DOOR—Page 150.



caneer would have wirelessly Mars to put out the sun. Nights were indispensable to the Rose Door.

Two girls were holding a conversation — were they? The dictionary defines “conversation” as “an interchange of ideas.”

“You make me tired, Mary Sullivan, honest to God you do, standing up for folks that don’t lift a finger for you. Here we are and here we have always got to stay; but the men in the biz with us, can leave it and get to be mayor or senator or preacher. Oh, the preachers! We here, and they sitting with their bellies full, studying their Sunday lesson, ‘Whatever is, is right.’ Ugh, to hell with them — my Rabbi and your Priest!”

“But maybe, Rebecca —”

“Oh, shut up with your ‘maybes.’ *Maybe* they are tearing their hair out because we are sick to the death of this life. *Maybe* they walk the floor all night because we can’t get out and make a living another way, any more than a fly that is pulling itself in two on sticky fly paper, can ever get off it. Didn’t you try? Didn’t I try? Did you ever hear of a preacher going insane thinking about our case? A prize fight makes them nutty, but us —”

"Still, Rebecca, maybe —"

"Yes, *maybe* they'll pull down these walls to-night, like the French people did to that prison and *maybe* they'll just go to bed and sleep," and Rebecca removed her cigarette, to spit straight out into their faces, while Mary Sullivan gave up and went out of the room.

The wise business man smiles in business hours. The customer has troubles, certainly, but the seller of goods has none.

"I heard you got married, Herb."

"Who told you?"

"Oh, a little bird. I didn't think I'd see Lieutenant Kenyon any more."

"A man can't give up all his friends just because he gets married, Rebecca."

Rebecca hummed:

"There's no place like home, dear,  
But I'm afraid to come home in the dark."

## VII

Another twenty-seventh arrived. The very next twenty-seventh to the great twenty-seventh when the wistaria gave forth electric blossoms; when moon and stars came down to twinkle in tall trees; when ten thousand roses gave their soft bodies to the dainty tread of a maiden. Such a twenty-seventh would never come again — so said the servants of Wistaria House.

On the second twenty-seventh, Dr. Hamilton sits looking over his mail. One letter he retains, pushing the others unopened aside. The envelope is postmarked, "Hilo, Hawaii." He opens it hurriedly — he reads it eagerly:

"Your letter to the Postmaster at Honolulu, was forwarded to me for an answer.

"Ralph Young returned home one month before the close of his second year at Berkeley. He went direct from the steamer to his Honolulu house and sent immediately for his father. The moment he appeared, Ralph retreated a step and uttered the word most hated in all the land of Kanehameha. But Albert Young went straight to him and winding both arms about him said: 'That is a sorry jest, Laddie.'

"When Ralph had said his say his father termed the San Francisco doctors, 'a pack of idiots' and sent post haste for me. I was in Honolulu and went at once.

"It was an attendant at the Turkish baths—himself a Hawaiian—who called Ralph's attention to his body and in a significant tone advised him to see a doctor at once.

"Ralph stripped for me; it was all under his clothes. When Albert Young saw, his face took on the look of a fallen gladiator, when thumbs are down.

" 'Yes' or 'No,' doctor, he said, with a brave attempt at courage.

"My tongue wouldn't say it. I nodded my head. He began to shiver; then he strangled and would have gone to the floor, but that Ralph and I took hold of him. I thought he was dying then and there—if he only had been. Of all cruel things there's nothing to compare with living.

"We seated him. He never stood again. He rallied, however, and cried, 'My boy, my boy, my boy!' Then there was swaying and inarticulate moaning, followed by an attempt to rise; but he could not.

" 'Come to your father, Laddie, his old legs have turned traitors,' he said.

"Ralph went to him. His father drew him down on his lap and putting his arms about him, pressed Ralph's face against his own, as he had done eighteen years before, when the nurse laid a soft, little bundle in his arms, saying, 'Here is your son.'

"Presently Ralph felt the encircling arms relax and he arose.

"A tremor rippled over Albert Young followed by an ague that threw his hands off the arms of the big chair and made his feet dance upon the floor. This passed and his voice returned. 'My boy, my Laddie, my little, little Laddie!' Then quiet.



"He was far back, sitting in the lap of existence, playing with a beautiful man child—back where Life made fair promises and where no man might call her 'liar' without being laid low by the eloquence of his enraptured, believing heart.

"This passed. He raised his voice; Doctor, you are a surgeon; can't you do anything. Cut them out. Cut them out!"

"Then, as though he knew he spoke folly, he dropped his face in his hands, and moaned and swayed and swayed and moaned.

"Then another arousing: 'But Molokai shan't get you, Laddie! We'll hide you where devils and a pack of blood hounds couldn't find you. We'll go to Hilo Bay—Mauna Loa is long and Mauna Loa is high. You won't be alone, Laddie. Your father will be with you all the time, and Joe will come too, to take care of you.'

"He paused to ponder some other thought.

"In a lowered voice: 'And, Laddie, there will always be a bright piece of steel close to your hand, and when the sight has grown intolerable, you can—erase it.'

"Then around the cycle again—moaning, ague, raving, quiet.

"In one of his quiet periods, Ralph spoke: 'Daddie, there's someone worse off than I. Someone without either parent; who is in utter poverty. One who had not a friend in the world, till I came to her.'

"The word 'her' caught Albert Young's attention and held it for a second.

"'Was she good to you?' he asked eagerly.

"'We loved each other,' answered Ralph.

"'Yes, but was she good to you, or was she after your money?' he repeated.

"'She asked nothing and gave all that a woman can give to a man,' said Ralph.

"Then, by God! though she be a Chinatown harlot she shall be the richest woman in San Francisco!" he shouted.

"The next minute he wilted, as a plant wilts in an unmoist, withering heat.

"I never saw a well man die so fast. He crumpled up like a slug thrust on to a fish hook. In four days he was gone. They said he would not eat. He could not perceive food. He was a disembodied spirit from the moment he read my verdict.

"Ralph died two years back—thank God! But Molokai got him."

## VIII

Four days later, a happy woman in a love-filled home sat studying her own name upon an unopened envelope. The writing was unfamiliar, so she inspected postmark and date for knowledge of the author, instead of reading the letter at once as a man would have done — so they say. After breaking the covering, she turned to the signature, but that was equally unknown. Then she began at the beginning:

*"Dear Mrs. Miller: —*

"Maybe you won't remember me, but I have never forgotten your kind eyes and Mary's lovely playthings. Miss Duncan once took me to visit you. I am the girl to whom Mary showed her dolls. I am writing you because I must tell you something. It will give you sorrow, but I have to tell you.

"Something so beautiful has just happened to me, that I am all the more sorry to make you sad. It is a letter that has made me so glad; while this letter will give you pain.

"My letter was not written to me, but to my doctor, though it was all about one who loved me and whom I loved.

"I will have to tell you quite a long story to show you

why I ought to write to you before I go away forever — for to-morrow I am going to a place I shall never leave.

“Two years after Miss Duncan took me to see you and Mary’s wonderful dolls, I met a Prince in Golden Gate Park. I did not know then that he was a Prince, but I know now. When it grew dark I was afraid and I cried, because I had no place to go. Then he took my hand and led me to a Palace. It was only one room, but now I know that it was a palace.

“Every day he took me on a trip to Fairyland. He called it tennis, theatre, lying on the beach sands, and many other happinesses. Hand in hand — always hand in hand — we sang and played all the days through, for two years. Then one day, the Prince turned into a spirit, and I couldn’t see him any more, or hear his voice, or feel him with my hands. He didn’t get sick, or die, or say good-bye! Just one day, I couldn’t find him. He had given me beautiful clothes, and we dined to sweet music, but after I had called and called to him, I grew hungry, for there was nothing in the Palace to eat. Then piece by piece, I gave all the pretty things in the Palace for food. After awhile the food was all eaten and I got hungry again and then hungrier and hungrier.

“At last I knew that he could not hear me, so I went away. I wanted to die. My heart ached so much that at last it couldn’t feel at all.

“I wandered about till one day I came to a place where I thought I would rest for awhile and then go on. But I never left it. No one can leave it. In this place it was as dark as the Palace had been light. It was filled with men who cared only to be naked and indecent. I tried to hide in a corner, but they pulled me out and laughed at me. They said I would get used to it, but I never did. Drink and drug helped a good deal, for they blurred my eyes and I was glad of that.

"Dear Mrs. Miller even you could not live this kind of life without drink and drug."

Agnes Miller shivered and then blood-red, there danced across the page: "I am the girl to whom Mary showed her dolls."

"For three days I have left drink and drug alone, so that my head might be clear enough to write to you — you can't know how hard it has been to go without them.

"Because I couldn't get used to the men, an awful thing happened to me. My doctor calls it 'hallucination.' I will describe it to you. If anyone calls my attention to a man on the street or any other place, instantly his clothes fall to his feet and I see him naked and indecent. Once I stopped to listen to a Salvation Army girl talking to a crowd of men. She told them that they were made in the image of God. In a flash I saw every one of them standing naked and indecent before her. I turned and ran down the street, till a policeman stopped me and asked if I was drunk or crazy. It doesn't make any difference if it is a judge or a preacher; I can never see them any other way.

"But, oh, Mrs. Miller! the Prince went away to save me from a dreadful disease that came upon him. But I had already caught it, though I did not know it. Even my doctor was not sure till he got a letter — the dear, dear, letter I told you of from a far-off country telling of the death of my Prince. If only I could have gone with him! To live while he lived; to die when he died. If only he had told me.

"But now the second beautiful thing has come into my life. I am to go where I can rest, rest, rest! Where I can dream all over again the two joyous years in the Palace. To-morrow night they will take me to a leprosarium!

Do not be afraid dear Mrs. Miller, for a friend has promised to copy this letter on to paper I have not touched."

Again a shivering seized Mrs. Miller; again a scarlet line shot across the page—"I am the girl to whom Mary showed her dolls."

"And now—I don't know how to tell you—but I want to save your other son and Mary. Robert has been my friend for two years and has visited me often. Don't feel too bad because he came, for every man comes to my kind—"

Under Mrs. Miller's staring eyes, a thousand-legged worm straggled on to the paper. All its legs curled into wriggling letters, and the letters crawled apart, into writhing words; the words heaved and fell to the line: "And directly, or through those we love, in unavailing travail we shall learn the truth!" And the closing punctuation was a face—the face of Alice Duncan.

"You need not tell Robert, and he can be just as happy as ever till it does come, and maybe it will never come. But you can keep watch.

"Good-bye, dear Mrs. Miller, good-bye, forever!"

Mrs. Miller's chin tipped forward onto her chest.

. . . . .

## IX

On the same day Lillian Kenyon also received a letter. She, too, sought the signature before reading it — but there was none:

“Don’t tear up this letter till you read it all, for I will tell you how to find out if it is the truth or a lie.

“Your husband has been keeping a woman at the Poinsettia Apartments, for five years. Go there and find out for yourself. They say she is only twenty-two and a beaut. If you want to get a hunch on, I’ll put you wise. Keep away from the house detective, he is your husband’s watch dog—not your blood hound. And don’t monkey with the elevator boy; he will be true to your husband’s tips; but make a pal of the janitor with some little yellow boys and he will get the number of his suite for you. I can tell you some more. Your hubbie kept another woman for four years before this one, but she got to drinking too much to suit him, so he threw her down. Men like to have us hog it with them, but they want us to keep straight all the rest of the time. I’ll tell you why I am helping you to spot him—because it will spoil your life. Because it will break your heart as a man once broke mine. Because you wouldn’t touch me with a ten-foot pole—Herb uses a shorter one.

“You and your new daughter sit in your fine house with servants to wait on you and don’t give a cuss if I rot here, and I don’t give one if this letter makes you bug house — *I hope it will!*

"When your son, Herbie, puts the police on my track and they break in my door to break my bones, they'll find me sucking on a gas tube like a sleeping baby with its bottle. See? But if I were you I wouldn't snitch—go to the Poinsettia Apartments. Now, good-bye, and I hope you and your new daughter will die hating life as much as I do. Ha, ha, ladies!"

Lillian Kenyon clenched her hands. "It is an infamous slander!" then she got up and walked the floor. "It's an abominable lie!" she paced faster. "The miserable wanton!" she crushed the letter into a million wrinkles. Then she sat down and burst into tears. That meant: "If it should be true!"

She got up and walked the floor again. "But it *couldn't* be!" She continued to walk.

If a lifetime devoted to husband and son had not trained her to do what their happiness required, unmindful of all personal discomfort, the result must have been very different.

She could carry to the grave the sting in the letter, if she could also hold absolute trust in the two who made up her heaven and earth; but to be faithful to them as she spelled fidelity, was to prove the letter a lie down to the last word.

That night her husband found a note on his bureau stating that she had been called out of town by a sick friend.



Quiet elegance of dress and subdued voice and manner were inseparable from Lillian Kenyon. After writing the note, she attired herself in a dark tailored suit and took a car for down town, where she entered a large store. In an hour she came out wearing a long, silk, champagne-colored coat; an extremely large hat with a dozen plumes and a champagne-colored veil.

Through a messenger boy she made an appointment with the janitor of the Poinsettia Apartments. They met at an obscure restaurant, and conversed as they lunched.

"I want a little information and I know your time is valuable," and she slid a twenty-dollar gold piece into his hand.

The janitor began to sit up and take notice.

Were there any vacant rooms at the Poinsettia?

"A few," he stated.

Another twenty dollars touched his hand. The janitor gasped.

At the Poinsettia, the house detective and elevator boy were considered the valuable men. He waited the sequel.

Did a gentleman, whom she described, have a suite there?

In the language of Rebecca, the janitor "got a hunch on."

He could find out; the housekeeper was a good friend of his, he assured her.

And would he take a slight compensation to the housekeeper for her trouble — another "yellow boy" reached him. He agreed to do so. He also agreed to meet the yellow-gowned lady at the same hour and place next day.

Lillian Kenyon slept that night at a down-town hotel.

Another day and another lunch with the janitor.

Yes, the gentleman described had a suite at the Poinsettia.

Would the janitor ascertain if the housekeeper could secure her rooms on the same floor?

He would try.

Another yellow trifle was laid at his plate and still another for the housekeeper. Both janitor and housekeeper narrowly escaped a stroke of apoplexy.

Another night at a down-town hotel. Another day; another luncheon for two at the renownless café. Lillian Kenyon spent that night at the Poinsettia.

Next day, the yellow-plumed lady visited a

printer. The second morning every lady on the same floor with the yellow lady found a card under her door:

HARRIET BROWN

SHAMPOOING AND MANICURING

THREE TREATMENTS FREE

and in pencil, the added words, Suite 404 Poinsettia Apartments.

Suite 404 was comfortably close to the Described Gentleman's Suite, as averred by the janitor and sworn to by his good friend the housekeeper. The complaisant housekeeper did more; while Harriet Brown stood in her own doorway the janitor's friend walked casually down the corridor and marked, "D. G. S." on a certain door; on her return, she felt a piece of metal touch her hand.

On the very day of the card issue a customer knocked; the next morning three called for treatment, and the third day every hour was filled. She was certainly doing business — free business.

Invariably Harriet Brown held open the door for each departing guest and solicitously watched her patient out of sight.

On the fifth day of Harriet's Brown's success, Ross Kenyon received a letter stating that his wife would be indefinitely detained.

Harriet Brown continued to shampoo, continued yellow thanks to housekeeper and janitor, continued to hold open the door for outgoing patrons, continued anxiously to assure herself of their safety within her range of vision; but none entered the D. G. S.

At noon, on the eleventh day of the card issue, she answered a tap on her door. A lady in a pink kimono slipped inside, saying, "I just got up, but I want a shampoo before I dress."

Uncombed curls hugged her neck; dimples laughed when lips were still; soft and merry were the eyes and pink as the silken robe were the cheeks just risen from a restful pillow.

Curly-head got an unusually long and gentle shampoo; when she finally slid down from the chair, Harriet Brown bowed her thanks and courteously held open the door, till pink gown entered D. G. S.

That night, as on previous nights, footsteps passed suite 404 and stopped at D. G. S.

That night, as on previous nights, Harriet Brown heard them. She felt sure of the distance; she had measured it mentally so many times, and once she had even paced it off.

In a week, curly-head came for another sham-

poo. She talked a little this time, and nearly went to sleep.

"You have so much magnetism," she told Harriet.

On a third visit she said, "I'll never let another person touch my head as long as you live. You are so gentle and you never hurry. The others hurt and pull out lots of hair."

One night, after footsteps had passed and stopped at D. G. S., after a door had softly opened and softly closed, Harriet Brown as quietly opened her own door and stepped to D. G. S. She gave a light tap upon the door.

"Who is it?" asked a soft voice.

"It's only Harriet Brown," was the reply.

"What do you want, Miss Brown?" queried Curly.

"I'm so frightened! May I speak to you for a moment?" begged Harriet.

The door was softly unlocked and opened a tiny crack.

"What's the matter, Miss Brown?" asked the soft voice.

Harriet stepped close to the crack. Then she pushed vigorously inside and kept going.

"My God, Lillian!"

Speechless, Curly looked from one to the other.

"What are you doing here, Lillian?"

"What are *you* doing here?" she counter questioned.

"Nothing wrong, as you see," he replied.

"How wrong would *you* see it to find me in a man's apartment, under similar circumstances?"

"That is different," he returned.

"From your point of view," she answered.

"From everyone's point of view; even you must allow that there is some difference between the social liberty of a man and a woman."

"From my point of view as recently attained, there is absolutely no difference in the social liberty of a man and a woman," she replied, with colorless lips.

"For God's sake, let me take you home, Lillian!"

"Where is my home?"

"Where it has always been," he answered firmly.

"And where is your home?"

"Where it has always been," he replied as firmly.

"One roof for us two can never again be sufficient," she said.



"FOR GOD'S SAKE, LET ME TAKE YOU HOME, LILLIAN!"—Page 168.





"What do you mean, Lillian? You are beside yourself."

"I have just answered you. Two roofs from now till the sun sets — may it soon set."

"Do you mean divorce?"

"I mean divorce."

"You are making a mountain out of a mole hill. You have been happy with me for a quarter of a century, and I am the same man to-day that I have always been."

"I know that now. I know you have always been the man you are to-day, but my education has all been acquired within six weeks."

The good breeding of a lifetime held perfect sway over voice and word; but such chaos reigned within her heart that Lillian Kenyon was fain to admit that the blood running riot through her veins was of a near savage ancestry, and as her pulses fought, she carried on a dual conversation — one within and one with the man before her.

"If you intend to give no consideration to the harm such publicity would do my business interests, or the injury to your own social standing, will you try to remember that you have a son whom you have always professed to hold dearer than your own personal comfort?"

"My son is a mature man and married. He should not wish me to live an insufferable life that his serenity may not be disturbed. I am going to assume that he would not so wish and act upon the assumption."

"Lillian, you are crazy!"

"I may be later, but just now I see clearly."

"To err is human, to forgive, divine, Lillian!"

"When the man does the erring and the woman the forgiving; but the other way around, the erring is unpardonable."

"Upon what grounds shall you ask for a divorce?"

"Upon the truth."

Then while the conversation within went on in a shrieking, ape-like uproar, she drew herself together tight and white: "And when the decree is granted, you owe it to this girl — younger than your own child — to marry her and give her home and name. She has given you her all, and there will be no divine forgiveness extended to her."

Curly looked at her with wondering eyes.

## X

"She's from the Rose Door — the third to the right," pointed the matron; "they brought her here six days ago, but it should have been six months before. You may be sure she has infected more than one with tuberculosis."

The place was the Woman's Hospital and the listening lady, a patron, who made regular visits.

"She's college bred — not a common happening at the Rose Door, I take it," continued the matron. "She is frantic to get back home. Of course, she would not live through the long journey. Also, of course, we do not tell her so, but lead her to believe that she will be taken there as soon as she is better."

"Where is her home?"

"Minnesota."

"Minnesota? Why, that is my birth state, and oh, I know how the longing for it hurts. May I talk to her?"

"She'll be happy to have you do so, and except at coughing periods, she talks easily."

Later, by an hour, the visiting lady sought the matron to exclaim: "We've got it all arranged. She's to come to me. I shall send for her tomorrow, and a tent on our back lawn will be ready for her. She shall at least have Minnesotans near her for the short time she has to live. Please send with her the best nurse you can procure."

"You are certainly an angel of mercy, Mrs. Thompson," replied the matron. But Mrs. Thompson's husband viewed the transaction differently.

"What possessed you to bring her here?"

"She's a dying girl, Merritt."

"All the more reason for leaving her at the hospital."

"But she was so homesick for Minnesota."

"Well, our lawn is not Minnesota."

"No, but Minnesota is our native state, as it is hers, and she is entranced when I talk to her of the homeland. Surely it is a little thing for us to do, and yet it is so much to her. Go in sometime, Merritt, and speak to her. She has been beautiful."

"Is there any of it left?"

"Yes, waves of brown hair, shining blue eyes — all too shining — and cheeks all too red."

"Well, I'll think about it."

Several hours each day, Mrs. Thompson sat in the tent, but she did not do all of the interesting talking.

"And there's a little girl?"

"Yes, she's past five now, but she's only a year old to me, and just toddling, because that was all she could do the last time I saw her."

"Do you mind telling me all about it, a little at a time, as you feel inclined from day to day? The knowledge may help me to aid some other girl before she has suffered as much as you have."

And so it was told.

"I had to leave an almost finished college course to earn my living. Soon after, I met the One, the Only One, that every girl dreams of from maidenhood to marriage. By day we both worked, but evenings we looked into each other's eyes. As I gazed, a picture grew of home, of love and children, but I never uttered the vision. What he saw, he did not speak, but I knew by the light in his eyes that he held it dear. When his business should shape itself aright, he would talk of the home; this, my heart confided to me. Dear at the first, he grew always dearer, till heaven would have been hateful without him.

One day close held in his arms he whispered, "To err is human, forgiveness is divine. I love you; shall I go? I am already married!"

"I fell down and died awhile, but fear tossed me back to life, and quickly I called out, just one word, 'Stay!'"

"Heaven came close. Then the ephemeral went, and the everlasting came. My baby — my little baby. For a whole year I refused such work as would separate me from her; and for a whole year we starved — my baby and I. Then with a needle rusty from dropping tears, I worked her name — Jordana Howells — on all her little garments, and left her at a foundling door.

"Not a few knew me as the mother of an illegitimate child, and deserted. Poverty cannot hide those things. When I obtained office work it was accompanied by the supposition that I was common rental, so I had to give that up. Then I tried teaching, but I was not allowed to finish my term. A little later, a wealthy bachelor, stricken with tuberculosis, was leaving for California, and suggested that I accompany him. I did. What else was there left for me to do? The world would not permit me to earn an honest living — it would not let me redeem my jewel from the pawn in which I had placed it; my only

alternative was one man or many. I preferred one. He died within a year."

Day after day Mrs. Thompson listened; wider parted her eyelids as she listened and faster beat her pulse. Who had cast Grace Howells out of her school work? Was it men? Immaculate men? Was it women who always forgive erring man? She would ask Grace. Grace swered: "Men send girls to the bad, Mr Thompson, but women keep them there."

"How, Grace?"

"Leaving out of count the mongrels among men, and the felines among women, the men of fine principle will say: "Give the girl another chance, give her a dozen chances. But the women of integrity — they will not have it so."

And Mrs. Thompson thought as she listened. And as she lay in bed at night, she thought. Did girls really wish to get out of that life? She would ask Grace.

"Many, many girls at the Rose Door and like places, struggle feebly or vigorously, according to the strength of their characters, to get out after a short apprenticeship," answered Grace. "A girl named Rebecca told me her story; a great many gave me their experiences, but hers particularly impressed me; not because her per-

sonality charmed me — she was forceful, not gentle; aggressive, not winsome; loyal, not yielding; and handsome, not pretty. But because she was a foreigner and without knowledge of the world, the pity of it was intensified.

“If I were to declare that every girl in immoral work was first drugged, you would hardly credit me. But I do say so — all of them, by the most powerful of all drugs — Deception. And none are so effectually deceived as those who deliberately enter it for money. There is no money in it — for the girl. Four prices are charged her for the necessities of her life. Her “Managers” have what they choose to name. The police take the rest. She has food and clothes — yes, but money in the bank for broken-down-health days; that would be an affront to the police *et al.*”

Another day.

“Will you tell me the story of the girl you mentioned — the foreigner?” asked Mrs. Thompson.

“Oh, Rebecca, yes. Rebecca was poor when she came to America, and still poorer when she wished to leave. There was a lover in the Fatherland, too poor to send her passage money homeward. She was homesick; she was despairing.



She would have walked the whole distance back, begging from door to door, if some thousands of miles had not been water.

“A man of her own race proposed a partnership with her in — I was going to say ‘crime,’ but a business desired by the best element of society as a safeguard for virtuous women cannot be called a crime. An occupation fostered by the state as promoting commercial prosperity is surely a social blessing. And when the breaking of one half of its daughters that the other half may live, is pronounced by the nation Expediency, its dying ones deserve to rank with the soldier — the patriot who fights and dies for his ‘boarding house,’ as Ingersoll has put it. So I will amend my statement. He planned a philanthropic enterprise with the vicarious act exclusively hers. This for a period of three months, out of which she was to receive two-thirds of the income, and with that sum she could return to homeland and lover to spend the rest of her days in devout thankfulness at having escaped from the ‘Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave.’

“At the end of the three months there were several hundred dollars due her. But in order to get away from the man at all, she had to steal out with only ten dollars in her pocket.

“ She was done with that kind of life. She had learned its lessons — absolute subjection, robbery, abuse.

“ Through an employment agency, she obtained kitchen work. Her mistress valued her, not only as a domestic, but also as protection during the many days that business took her husband away from home. It was six weeks before Rebecca served him at table; then she placed the roast before — a former customer!

“ ‘ Send that girl off, bag and baggage,’ were his directions to his wife when Rebecca had left the room.

“ The obedient wife paid Rebecca and told her that if she were not out of the house in an hour, she would call the police.

“ That she might not be traced, Rebecca sought work through a different labor bureau. A month passed — a comfortable month; full of cooking, washing and ironing, but she owned her own body. Nor was hope extinguished; she would get back to the Fatherland; she was earning three dollars a week; she would not spend one penny and at the end of a year she would go back. She had her dreams, too — by day and by night; she would go to Benjamin; she would tell him the whole story; he would believe her. It was the

truth; it would sound like the truth. Then his old love for her and her constant love for him would aid her in convincing him. She was young yet, and good looking — yes, better looking than when she left the Fatherland, and that would help some. She determined to regain Benjamin's love, though she could not marry him. He belonged to her — not to the other woman — hadn't she paid the price?

"One day she fairly collided with a down-town policeman who recognized her and demanded former favors. When she told him she was 'living straight now,' he laughed and re-demanded. She refused. He was offended. He asked her where she was working. She refused to tell. He told her he would find out, and he did.

"Manfully he did his duty to the virtuous woman Rebecca was serving, and out Rebecca went, 'bag and baggage.'

"But Rebecca was a stubborn spirit — as bad as Banquo's ghost. To the very edge of the city, she went, seeking work.

"A young married woman and a baby needed her. Rebecca grew fond of the baby, therefore the mother grew fond of Rebecca.

"One day Ah Sing brought the husband's laundry. Rebecca took it.

"When the wife paid him, he lowered his voice to say: 'She livee your house?'

" 'Yes, she does my work.'

" 'You nicee lady. You no keepee her. She badee woman in Chinatown.'

"The lady interviewed Rebecca. Rebecca told her all and insisted that she wished to work hard for the rest of her life.

"The lady told her she feared she could not be trusted.

"Rebecca arrived at the Rose Door, 'bag and baggage.'

"Mrs. Thompson, do you want to hear a fable? "

"Yes, if you are the narrator."

"Once a boat capsized with a dozen people, half men and half women; but as a bridge was just over their heads they all succeeded in climbing up the supports to its roadway. Whenever a man was seen clutching the balustrade the hurrying travellers above paused to offer a hand to him. Especially did the women do noble work, a score sometimes assisting one man over the railing. Later, the white fingers of the capsized women appeared grasping the floor of the bridge. The rushing men scarcely noticed them but the quick sympathy of the women spied them on the instant, and they gently stepped on them. If that act were not sufficient to make the clingers take the hint, they quietly in a ladylike way, and patiently in a Christianlike way, but persistently in a businesslike way kicked the fingers with their toes till the hands loosened their hold

and their owners each and all fell back into the water, and were never seen on the bridge again.

"Then it went down in history that the chief difference between a man and a woman is that when they both fall into the water, the woman likes it so well that she always remains with the mermaids while the man is commonly known to climb away from those wicked vocalists into the outstretched arms of the heavenly singers on the bridge above."

Each night, after the day's narrative, Mrs. Thompson heard, close pressed to her ear as the pillow, the whisper, "Men send girls to the bad, but women keep them there."

One day Grace volunteered: "Next to Rebecca, the most unusual character that I met at the Rose Door was a Socialist. He preferred me to the other girls because I would listen to his talk. Socialism was his religion. Personally, he would not have cared if the whole world knew he was a regular at the house; but he would rather have been unsexed than injure the Cause. I had heard Socialism called a 'home breaker'; he called it a home maker, and always ended his visit with: 'When Socialism comes, it will wipe prostitution off the earth. It is only a matter of bread and butter,' he said. 'Since the world began, maid and youth have mated outside the marriage bond and they will continue to do so

until the end of time, because God says, only, "Mate," while man alone, pipes, "Marry." But since the world began woman has never given her body willingly to men she loathed, except as a means of subsistence, and to the end of time, she never will for any other reason.' "

"My Susie, my Susie!" and the morning stars looked in on Mrs. Thompson's sleepless pillow.

Another day, "Tell me more of your odd friend, if you don't mind. It is a new thought to me."

"Yes, it was to me and I haven't been able to digest it all, yet. He said the Rose Door was a business, like any other business — for the money in it. That it was a competitive business, like all businesses. Its dealers, like all dealers, must make the business attractive, must struggle for the largest market; for the highest prices. Must obtain supply of goods — our girls; must stimulate the demand for the goods — our boys. Must lower the price of stale goods; and sweep into the alley the unsalable. Must order fresh goods continually, and evoke desire by the best advertising methods."

With down-dropped lids Mrs. Thompson mused. At last rousing, "How could you,

Grace, with your refinement, endure to wallow with the swine of menkind?"

"Oh, I didn't, Mrs. Thompson. The Rose Door is one of the respectable places. The dirty, the ragged, the drunkard, the negro, the soldier, and the Mongolian, are barred out."

"Then how much business could you do?"

"A rushing business, continuous and regular."

"Where did you get your trade?"

"From high-school students and business men and officers of the Presidio."

"High-school students! You don't mean that, Grace, surely."

"In three years, Mrs. Thompson, your Frank will know the street and number of the Rose Door — Oh, forgive me, dear Mrs. Thompson, I didn't mean to say that."

The blood tide had ebbed and flowed in Mrs. Thompson's face.

"Do you mean you made a misstatement?"

There was no reply from Grace.

"Or, do you mean that you regret that you thoughtlessly told me a killing truth — a truth that would kill?"

From between Grace's white eyelids splashed tears upon her whiter hands. Mrs. Thompson

left the tent to be alone, all alone for a time. My Frank, my Frank! was the chant that night.

Another day, "What more did your friend say, Grace?"

"He made one very strong statement — one I meant to study up to see if it could be verified, but, well, in my work, we have one all-absorbing study — how to get and hold men, and I never found time to read up on it. He said that if all the women in the world were brutally ravished they would not sustain one-thousandth of the physical and mental injury that now comes to them from the love-plague via prostitution. Father and husband contract it; heredity and marriage transmit it. There is no cure for it; doctors merely drive it out of sight and some day the healed looks up to see a grisly wraith ambling along at his side — ataxia or its brother. He quoted the great Doctor Zossler as saying, 'Whoever learns all there is to know about the love disease, need study no other disease.'"

Hours later Mrs. Thompson closed her eyes to the lullaby, "My Susie; my Frank; my Frank; my Susie."

"I'm going to the public library," said Mrs. Thompson one morning, "to get some books on the subjects your peculiar friend was so fond of



discussing, and together we'll put him to the test."

"He certainly was unlike any other man who came to us. One night I had a sore throat and fever; when he left, he paid the price of a night on condition that I be not disturbed.

"Another time he arranged for me to hear a noted Socialist speak. I met him at Kearny and Market Streets, where we took a car. When we reached the hall he gave me a ticket and I went in alone. After the meeting he took me home —"

"Home!" There was a little shock in Mrs. Thompson's voice.

"Well, I know the word wouldn't bear analysis," acquiesced Grace. "A year ago, he went to New York, but he stopped over a whole day in Minneapolis to find my baby and write me all about her. He had her picture taken, and the photographer sent it to me. She isn't the baby I left, but she is a beautiful child — I wonder what her fate will be."

"I wonder what her fate will be?" was the song Mrs. Thompson carried to dreamland that night.

One day, as his wife had suggested, Mr. Thompson stepped to the tent door and looked

in. Mrs. Thompson looked up from a book. The sick girl also looked up; then she raised herself upon an elbow to look — “Merritt!”

He will be no whiter when he is dead. He will be no more motionless when he is confined — for one moment — then he walked away.

Can you picture the composite — Question, Incredulity, Terror? Then you have the look on Ida Thompson’s face.

There was silence in the tent; the girl’s breath came fast.

“Tell me, Grace!”

Only silence.

“Was it — was it he?”

“Don’t ask me, dear Mrs. Thompson.”

“I am answered. And — his — name — at that time?”

“Merritt Jordan!”

“And the baby you named ‘Jordana Howells.’ — I see.”

Calling the nurse, Mrs. Thompson left for the night.

There was a conversation in the house of the ambitious fuchsia.

“Did you know there was a child, Merritt?”

“I refuse to discuss the matter, Ida. The

man is all to blame, if you let the woman tell the story."

"I am not weighing the blame at present. I am merely asking if you knew there was a child, of which you are the father?"

"How do I know how many visitors she had in my absence?"

"I am answered," said Ida Thompson. "For the children's sake, the same roof shall cover us. Continue to live a bachelor life, when absent from home; I, too, shall live single, though in a different sense. For the children's sake, also, we must be courteous to each other in their presence — out of their sight, we shall not meet. When they are grown I shall claim the right to live elsewhere; but at no time, will I be a party to consigning one child of the same family to poverty and loneliness, while the others have love and luxury."

"What do you mean?"

"I am going to Minneapolis for the child."

"And start the tongues of the whole city to wagging? Great consideration for your children, that!"

"I can count my own life as naught for my children, but I will not abandon their sister to

misery and shame. You can proclaim the child an orphaned relative, and let it go at that, if you wish, but I am going to Minneapolis for the child."

"You're a fool!"

"I am not a knave!"

Merritt Jordan Thompson left on a business trip.

"You've grown fond of writing of late," said Mrs. Thompson, when Grace had scribbled on and off for three consecutive days.

"Oh, I'm just dreaming of Minnesota, and writing down my dreams," she smiled back.

"If they're homesick dreams, I shall spoil them, for I have something beautiful to tell you; I am going to Minneapolis for your baby; you shall have her here with you; when you get well you shall still have her — she shall never leave you again."

"Oh, Mrs. Thompson!" was all the answer for that day.

The next day: "Dear Mrs. Thompson, I am not going to get well; I thought for a long time that I would, but at last, I see that I cannot."

"We are going to hope that you will, Grace, but if you should leave us, your baby shall forever more live with her brother and sister; to

share their home, their education and the love I bear them."

"Oh, Mrs. Thompson!" was all the answer.

Day after day in Mrs. Thompson's ears, rang the accusation—"Men send girls to the bad, but women keep them there."

"But Grace," she said in defense, "I have been told that such women are invariably untruthful and deceitful in every particular, and spend their whole thought upon setting traps of every description for men."

"Prostitution is a business, Mrs. Thompson, nothing more. Selling intoxicating drinks is a business also. In each case, the salesman's whole occupation is to stimulate trade—to advertise, to attract the largest number of patrons possible without concern as to the result to the customer. Remove the profits in either business, and you have killed the business."

## XI

The next day Grace held out a little boo' to Mrs. Thompson, saying:

"This was a gift from my idiosyncratic friend — I think it will interest you."

That evening in bed, Mrs. Thompson opened it:

"The Social Evil is very old, nearly as old as human society itself. As far back as history gives any record, evidences of the existence of this peculiar and terrible traffic can be found. Throughout the ages man has been the strong, invasive, dominant sex and women have been more or less weak, dependent, subservient. In various ways, from savagery to modern civilization, women have been subjugated; they have been first captured, beaten, stolen, then bought, and cajoled; and after all, prostitution is but one phase of this general and all-prevailing dominance of man. Out of this very prevalence of mastery on the one hand and subserviency on the other, men have grown stronger physically and mentally, women smaller, weaker, more dependent in character. The difference in strength and power very early in the history of the race became fixed and permanent. In the early stage of society, after masculine dominance had been established, sex relations were merely a matter of capture and conquer. Women had no choice in the transaction, whatever.

"Of course, such a state of society, made prostitution impossible. Prostitution is defined, as, 'selling one's self for the use of another for a price' and this could not be done by persons who did not own their own bodies. Women could be lent or sold by their masters, but they did not possess the right to bestow themselves on any man, for money or love.

"It is true that riotous and excessive intercourse prevailed during the earlier stages of human society. But women were not consulted as to their wishes. The chiefs of the tribes owned all the women and they exchanged or lent them to one another."

Mrs. Thompson threw the book down; it nauseated her; perhaps a woman who had led the life Grace had, might be able to read the article without qualm, but she, herself, did not feel benefited by the perusal. She looked about her to change the current of her thoughts; the soft tinted walls rested her eyes; the velvet carpet spoke of quiet footfall and the down beneath her body held her easy as a rocking mother's arms. There was peace in the world and rest and — sleep.

The next night in the same bright room on the same couch of down she reached for the book.

"The idea of marriage arose thus: a scarcity of women, or admiration for one particular woman, first aroused in man the desire for permanent possession; but for a long

while wives were communal property for the communal system extended to everything. For her to dispose of her person without authorization was a capital crime, but the husband had the undisputed right to lend out or barter his wives.

"So that as yet, there were no women free to sell themselves and personally receive the price. They were still sold, given away or lent; but they could not dispose of themselves in any of these ways. Modern prostitution had not yet begun.

"With the evolution of private property, in lands, dwellings and cattle, the idea of permanent marriage between one man and one woman began to grow up. But even where a monogamic form of marriage prevailed, polygamy has always existed; also cases of polyandry. But with the conception of private possessions came the desire that one's own children might inherit these possessions; therefore the custom of one man taking one woman to be exclusively his own, to whom no other man must ever be admitted, sprang up and came to be a deeply rooted institution. When the man's own strong, right arm could not always be present to enforce obedience, a sort of mental watch dog was provided, by inculcating the idea of *duty* and of the honor to be found in faithfulness and virtue—on the part of the wife. Moses, too, at a very opportune time strengthened the spiritual shackles with a convenient: 'Thus saith the Lord! Thy desire shall be unto thy husband and he shall rule over thee.' Thus woman's status in society was fixed for ages to come."

Mrs. Thompson laid down the book. She must digest that much before reading further.

Another night in lounging robe of delicate feel, on the bed of down by a low-hanging bulb



of light, Mrs. Thompson picked up the book of disgusting recital to look for the name of the irritating author. Why, the investigations of a physician? Were they really facts? She opened to her last reading.

"The earth and its products coming to be held as private property, it naturally followed that a large portion of mankind were left without land or homes or means of living. The majority of women were married or owned exclusively by individual men and in that sense, 'provided for.' But there was still a large class of women who did not belong to anyone; fathers, uncles or brothers not being able to care for or suitably dispose of all their womenkind. Naturally, the dispossessed put their wits to work to make themselves useful to, or desired by the possessing classes in any and every way possible to imagine. Men prostituted their talents, their powers, their skill, and the women who belonged to them in any way. Free women prostituted themselves.

"Thus the history of prostitution is the history of private poverty in the earth and all that it brings forth when labor is applied to it."

Mrs. Thompson leaned back on soft pillows and closed her eyes. As a young girl, she had been sent to a "finishing" school where graciousness of manner and musical and literary polish had been grafted on to a nature already sweet and refined. As a wife, she was chastity itself; as a mother, unselfish, utterly. Society found her interested in philanthropic enterprises, and

an authority in Shakespearian Clubs. "Versatile," her friends called her. "Educated!" Mrs. Thompson spoke to Mrs. Thompson, "and I knew no more of the origin of marriage and private property than does Susie! A well-informed woman! who thought prostitution was entered upon for pleasure."

She took up the book with the light gone out of her eyes.

"Man has set the world-old example of sex barter with no element of love whatever in it. Women, driven by destitution, find it easy to do what they have been cowed and beaten into doing for ages.

"Now the thought will arise that not all women who sell themselves do so because of actual, dire destitution. Many have yielded themselves through an extreme love of finery and things of beauty, or from the hope of greater luxury and more leisure than an honest life would afford them. This is all too true. Society has made the earning of a good, decent living for the average woman a very difficult thing. It has made the opportunities for exercising her faculties and abilities to advantage very scarce indeed. Always, under our economic system, there is a large class of unemployed workers. This must inevitably be the case when the actual workers are not paid enough to buy back one-fourth of what they produce. An ever abundant surplus of goods on the market, necessitates hard times, or no work at all to a large number of wage workers. The individual members of the class change each month perhaps, but the class is always there. Women have a natural love for the beautiful and for refinement and sweetness of life and a little daily leisure is like a

glimpse of heaven to most of them. For the innate, uncomprehended craving so many women experience, they do voluntarily sell themselves, without love and without passion, hoping to find the ease, luxury, beauty and cheer they long for, and little dreaming how much worse their fate will be than it was before.

"Women marry to gain wealth, position, influence, leisure and luxury, and the world does not condemn them; yet they are no *different* and no *better* than the women who give themselves for a month, a week or an hour for these same things."

Again Mrs. Thompson laid down the book. Her mind ran over the marriages of her school-girl friends. Clara loved Sammy and married Dick; they went to Europe for a year. Emily married a widower sixty years old, but she has servants and a chauffeur.

She resumed her reading:

"What is the alternative to-day for the good woman, who will not give herself in either of these ways, and who has not inherited money or has no father or brother who is willing to support her? Progress has opened up many new fields of activity for woman, but after all she will find the struggle to earn a living a nerve-wearing and bitter struggle. Not all women can marry the men they love—what else can they do?

"If the woman takes up sewing for a living she must work ten, twelve or more hours a day, as fast as her fingers can fly, seated in a close room, getting no physical exercise, until disease sets its fatal mark upon her; and she will receive for it barely enough to keep body and soul

together. Or else she can work in some of the factories under similar conditions; or she can go to work in somebody's kitchen and be looked upon as a machine, without feelings, desires or capacity for happiness; a creature not fit to sit with, to eat with or to talk with, one who is not supposed to need love or friendship or companionship. What self-respecting woman will voluntarily choose such an existence?—to wash and scrub and grow bent and wrinkled with hard, knotted hands and ugly form; be always tired and always just outside the circle where life is really lived.

“Or one may rise to be a stenographer, a bookkeeper or a clerk. But even here, unless one buys her position with her sex favors, it is insecure and she is poorly paid and ill-considered.”

“Susie!” burst from Mrs. Thompson's lips and, “Susie, Susie,” rang through all her dreams that night.

Every word she had read she hated. She hated the very color of the book, yet she opened it at the first moment of leisure next day.

“A teacher, perhaps, has a better chance as her hours are not so long and she is treated with some respect by her patrons. But women who teach continuously, are usually nervous wrecks at forty or forty-five. Women do sometimes make good canvassers or agents. If they possess a quality generally known as ‘cheek’ and are not sensitive to the treatment they receive from strangers they may make a success of it and may not be compelled to work all the time. But the woman has to know that she is forcing articles upon people which they do not want, and she must too often feel herself a fraud. All these

devious ways are so dreary, so ugly, so devoid of all that makes life worth living, that it is a strong character indeed that can turn back from the enticement of an *apparently* easy life spent in ministering to a man's desires, to take up the dull plodding life of a common wage worker.

"The majority of prostitutes come from the wage-earning classes, which proves that women are driven to such a life. Typewriter girls, bookkeepers and clerks are easy prey to their employers, because they are often in the midst of well-dressed, refined people, and see gaiety, enjoyment, good cheer on every side and find it impossible to participate in any of these, or to dress decently on the wages they receive for mere toil. The master, or the master's son considers the domestic servant legitimate prey; when the masters have tired of them, or they have been discovered by the mistresses, they are turned out; what other resource have they but to drift to the houses of prostitution?

"Laundry women seldom work longer than three or four years before breaking down. They earn from four to eight dollars a week."

Mrs. Thompson arose and left the house for a walk. She wanted to look at life as she had done before Grace Howells loomed upon her horizon. She would, by calm reflection, get back to her previous point of view—"God's in his heaven; all's right with the world"—and forget that of this pessimistic doctor.

She walked one block, and then headed for home, where she removed her wraps and hurriedly took up the book.

"Women are not as sweet and noble to-day as nature would have had them, for woman was first mastered, beaten into submission, robbed, outraged, violated; until her whole sweet, natural sex nature became distorted and stunted; later on she was starved and frozen into offering her body with apparent willingness, and then she was flattered, coaxed, and humored until she would consent to become a docile plaything. Sometimes, she has been placed upon a pedestal and worshipped, not for her humanity but for her sex; again she has been hawked about and offered for sale by ambitious parents seeking buyers in worn-out old rouses, with titles or money bags.

"Can there be any wonder that women are what they are — shallow, volatile, deceitful, vain, incapable of great love or of great actions."

Mrs. Thompson leaned back in her chair, "Where, oh where, is the cure for this?" she groaned.

"Mamma, do something quick!" Susie stood before her with a cut finger.

It was a dear task tenderly to bind it — nature would do the rest. But the incident only caused her question to echo more loudly — "Where is the cure? Where is the cure?" Perhaps the book would answer at the last. She took it up:

"Where there is poverty and destitution there will be prostitution, both of men and women."

"Yes, but where is the cure?" she persisted.

"A prominent merchant in a large city was asked to subscribe five hundred dollars toward the building of a 'home' for fallen women. He amiably complied, and the next morning reduced the wages of all the sewing women in his manufacturing department—and thus gave them an extra push toward the path that led to his 'home' for fallen women."

"But the cure?"

"Vice and crime can be abolished. When? When we are certain of the cause of them—and then remove those causes. What are their causes? Involuntary poverty."

A trifle indeed! Remove poverty! But a command is not an explanation. How was this petty obstruction to be pushed aside? Could the gloomy healer prescribe the antidote? She resumed the book.

"'But the law might do something to wipe out the evil, surely,' exclaim some. The world has been legislating against sin for thousands of years, but the sin remains just the same. Cleaning out a bagnio is like clearing an old, decaying house of rats by making a loud noise and frightening them away for a time. All the unhappy wretches exist still and must live in some way. They have no other way of securing it except by practicing their old profession, only, now, they do it more secretly and in darker and more dangerous corners. Nothing but a complete change in the social and economic institutions and systems of our civilization will effect a cure for the evil under discussion; little remedies do not actually affect

the evil and its underlying cause. The world is waking up to the fact that all human beings are related and that *what concerns one concerns all!*"

"*The concern of one is the concern of all,*" murmured Mrs. Thompson. "It is true, it is true! My Frank! My Susie!" and again Mrs. Thompson leaned back with closed eyes which saw.

The book continued to call.

"While there are owners of the earth and homeless ones, because of it; while there are masters and servants; while there are the favored few and the oppressed majority, there will always be wrongs and abuses which cannot be cured. The earth and all its resources, must belong to all alike. Useful labor must be the only foundation for the ownership of wealth. None should be overworked—drudgery dulls the faculties, paralyzes the brain and dwarfs the body. This is pure selfishness, enlightened, for each will possess enough and need not fear the encroachments of his needy brother.

"When all are afforded full opportunity to act and develop and grow, does anyone think that man or woman will sell himself or herself for base uses? Would there be any *cause* for prostitution? Certainly not."

Mrs. Thompson closed the book, repeating, "Certainly not."

. . . . .

One day the eyes did not open; one day the cheeks were not red; and from the stiffened fin-



gers Mrs. Thompson drew a crumpled paper —  
the dreams, the homesick dreams of Minnesota:

Home of gentle Minnehaha,  
Of Winona, child of air;  
Shrine of grieving Hiawatha,  
Minnetonka's shady lair.  
Temple of Saint Anthony's alto  
Where he singeth without care;  
Hunting ground of the Dacotah —  
That, oh that is Minnesota.

Where the clouds are sunlit ever;  
Where the skies give deepest blue;  
Where a thousand lakes laugh heavenward;  
Where a thousand bluffs peer through  
Pine tree boughs, whose leaves drop healing,  
Where come hope and youth anew,  
And where loved the fierce Dacotah —  
There, oh there, is Minnesota.

Where the breezes croon in chorus,  
Mississippi's birth place o'er;  
Where great oak trees, giant sentries,  
Guard the mighty river's shore;  
Where the golden-rod, the regal,  
Makes an endless golden floor,  
And where sleeps the brave Dacotah —  
There, oh there, is Minnesota.

When thy sons, beyond thy valleys,  
By life's toil are pushed afar;  
Homesick grow they for thy glories,  
For thy winter's snowy spar!

## THE ROSE DOOR

Long they for the Cloudy Water,  
Hear it calling, calling far  
As it called to the Dacotah:  
Minnesota! Minnesota!

THE END



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